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A Historical Study of Group Discussion Principles and Techniques Developed by 'The Inquiry,' 1922-1933.

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A HISTORICAL STUDY OF GROUP DISCUSSION PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES DEVELOPED BY "THE INQUIRY," 1922-1933

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The author here expresses his appreciation to Louisiana State University for nurturing its Department of Speech, to the Southern Fellowships Fund for generous assistance at a critical juncture, to Dr. Waldo W. Braden for patience and wise counsel through the years.

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ABSTRACT

A careful survey of the literature of the discussion movement has revealed few historical studies, for most discussion research has been experimental or descriptive. The purpose of this historical study is to describe and analyze the work of "The Inquiry," a small group of conference experts who began in 1922 a comprehensive though not too systematic development of discussion principles, techniques, and instructions.

The study begins by placing the organization in its historical context. The "Inquirers" were influenced by the popular writers and critics who helped to create the mood of the times, but they drew the fundamental principles of their social creed from three particular sources: John Dewey, who provided the proper intellectual climate; Mary Parker Follett, who worked out the political implications of widespread discussion; Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel, who gave the organization its original impetus by demanding that the churches engage in social amelioration.

The story of the Inquiry can be divided into three periods. In the first the founders set up "The National Conference on the Christian Way of Life," modeled after the Federal Council of Churches. As they went about hiring a staff, renting quarters, and securing financial support, they formulated their goal--a great national meeting of Christians, preceded by widespread group study of industrial, racial, and international problems. In the second period, 1924-1929, the staff and their associates became in fact the center of the enterprise, and their interest in developing discussion methodology under varying circumstances finally made the plans for the national meeting untenable. These "Inquirers," particularly S. C. Carter, Rhoda McCulloch, Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Bruno Lasker, Eduard C. Lindeman, Harrison S. Elliott, and William Heard Kilpatrick, participated to some degree in many of the significant national and international conferences held during the period. The final three-year period included the completion of various projects and several attempts to evaluate the work of the organization.

This study suggests that the Inquirers made two contributions to the discussion movement. First, they spread the new methodology far and wide. Led by Harrison S.

Elliott, a team of them planned and directed the Y.M.C.A.'s Helsingfors Conference in 1926. Not only did they help to found the Institute of Pacific Relations, but in the 1927 Honolulu Conference particularly they had a heavy influence on the Institute's conference methodology. They played a key role in planning and recording the Conference on American Relations with China, held in Baltimore in 1925. In the spring of 1927 they sponsored, with Columbia University, a pioneer course in discussion leadership. These are typical illustrations of some hundred conferences and scores of group meetings where these conference experts appeared to offer their services. They took the discussion message from Honolulu to Helsingfors and around the world.

The second contribution of the Inquirers lies in their development of techniques and instructions. Believing they were developing the methodology of democracy, they opposed debate as being old-fashioned and wasteful. Yet they recognized that the discussion method, too, has its limitations. They developed a "situation approach" which anchors discussions in the lives and experiences of ordinary people; they adopted Dewey's famous pattern of reflective thought to group deliberation. They defined a new kind of leadership and gave the subject-matter expert a new role in the group. They recognized the influence of the group's

size and shape on its functioning. Perhaps most important of all, they insisted that skilled and thorough preparation is the key to success wherever men choose to solve their problems and educate themselves by discussion.

INTRODUCTION

Only a few scholars and research experts have turned to historical studies in discussion, although many of them have, especially in the last decade, produced a large number of experimental and descriptive studies. Specialists in a number of fields have subjected the many facets of the group process and other discussion phenomena to successful scientific inquiry. The bibliographies of these materials, which appear from time to time, are themselves important historical studies, and as such they serve as valuable first steps. In addition, the literature does include a few studies which can be classified "historical." In a 1937 article James H. McBurney set out to determine some of the relations of the discussion movement to the history of rhetoric and dialectic. He suggested that the popular kind of logic typical of Aristotle's rhetoric and dialectic should be used in discussion instead of the more rigid and formal rules of science.[1] William M. Sattler has also been interested in

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[1]"Some Contributions of Classical Dialectic and Rhetoric to a Philosophy of Discussion," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIII (February, 1937), 1-13.

the relationship of dialectic in ancient Greece to discussion in modern America.[2] Karl R. Wallace has done an intensive investigation of the speech work of Francis Bacon. He has reported that the term "group discussion" was not used in the Elizabethan age, but the Renaissance Englishmen were very much aware of the importance of committee work in the two Houses.[3] One of the few studies of the modern discussion movement is the present author's master's thesis on "the group principle" of Mary Parker Follett; he analyzed her work and its influence on her contemporaries and on the discussion movement in the years that followed.[4]

Yet modern writers in the field are aware of the debt they owe to those who preceded them in the movement. In their 1954 discussion text William M. Sattler and N. Edd Miller of the University of Michigan point out that they have drawn their materials from three areas: early writers

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[2]"Socratic Dialectic and Modern Group Discussion," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIX (April, 1943), 152-157.

[3]"Discussion in Parliament and Francis Bacon," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIII (February, 1957), 12-21.

[4]Richard F. Douthit, Mary Parker Follett and the Group Principle (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1953),

such as Dewey, Elliott, and Fansler; recent studies and experimental projects; their own teaching experience.[5] In the latest text to be published Barnlund and Haiman have identified two great streams of thought which have influenced their work, the first arising in "the thinking of John Dewey and his associates," the second being the modern psychological research, particularly that of Kurt Lewin. In the first of these streams they identify the Inquiry, Eduard Lindeman, Mary Follett, Harrison Elliott, and Grace Coyle among those "applied social scientists" who have been primarily concerned with "the way in which ideas are generated and communicated in the context of American political and social life."[6] An older discussion text includes in its bibliography a selected list of the Inquiry's Occasional Papers, which appeared from 1925 to 1930.[7] These illustrations are perhaps typical of many in which the writer indicates his cognizance of the past and the significance of the work found there.

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[5]Discussion and Conference (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1954), p. v.

[6]Dean C. Barnlund and Franklyn S. Haiman, The Dynamics of Discussion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. xiv.

[7]James H. McBurney and Kenneth G. Hance, Discussion in Human Affairs (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), p. 413.

But these writers are themselves sometimes guilty of a vague and inaccurate knowledge of the past. For example, James H. McBurney has identified Mary Parker Follett and H. A. Overstreet as members of the Inquiry,[3] when neither of them were ever involved in the organization, though both did appear with some of the Inquirers on various programs. Trusting McBurney's account, the present author attached some importance to the fact, as he saw it at the time, that Miss Follett was a member of the Inquiry.[9] David H. Jenkins seems to indicate, in his review of group dynamics research for social science teachers, that the concept of group process can be understood only in terms of experimental findings.[10] It seems strange that he would discuss the research on "the group process" and not draw from Elliott's Process of Group Thinking,[11] which he cites as a "suggested reference." Elliott's book contains a thorough analysis of the process, based on many years of conference experience. Ignorance of history, reflected in these examples, is perhaps not unusual,

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[3]McBurney, "Some Contributions. . . ."

[9]Douthit, op. cit., p. 73.

[10]"Research in Group Dynamics," Social Education, XII (December, 1948), 347-350 ff.

[11]Harrison F. Elliott, The Process of Group Thinking (New York: Association Press, 1928).

but it does seem unwise. The discussion historian may do the discussion scientist a real service by preserving the relevant features of the past and presenting them for consideration.

In the present generation Bruno Lasker's Democracy through Discussion[12] is the only full statement of "Inquiry" principles and techniques, and it was this book which led the present author to a study of the organization of which Lasker was such an important part. It began in 1922 when a small group of churchmen went to the Federal Council of Churches and asked for official sanction of a "National Conference on the Christian Way of Life." They wished to create a new kind of national meeting, based on wide-spread participation, including laymen as well as the professional church workers. Having secured the Council's blessing, they set about providing financial support, renting an office, employing a staff, and laying plans for their Conference. As the organization began to take shape, the staff, and certain associates and consultants, became in fact the vital center of the organization. This group, who soon began calling themselves "Inquirers" and the organization "The Inquiry,"

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[12]New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1949.

included E. C. Carter, Rhoda McCulloch, Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Bruno Lasker, S. M. Keeny, E. C. Lindeman, Harrison S. Elliott, and, in later years, William Heard Kilpatrick. As it gradually became evident that the National Committee, the governing body, was never going to complete plans for the National Conference, the organization became a group of conference consultants and discussion experts, ready, even eager, to offer their services free-of-charge anywhere in the world. The Inquirers arranged for, participated in, or observed a number of the significant national and international meetings held during their period. The record of their work is included in the books and pamphlets which they published, their file of correspondence and reports, and in the memory of those who are still present to testify.

The Purpose of the Study

This is a historical study of the Inquiry. It seeks, first, to place the organization in its historical context by describing "the mood of the times" and by analyzing the work of certain writers and thinkers who preceded and accompanied the Inquirers in the discussion movement. This is the substance of Chapters One and Two. This study seeks, secondly,

to present, in Chapter Three, the relevant historical facts regarding the organization, its personnel, its activities, its method of finance, and its publishing program. Chapter Four describes the Inquirers' "social creed," that amalgam of principles and theories from which they drew their precepts and guidance. Chapters Five and Six describe their two great contributions to the discussion movement: a rather widespread promulgation of the new ways of holding meetings and a comprehensive though not too systematic development of techniques and instructions. A final chapter summarizes the findings of the study. The purpose of this dissertation is, in short, to describe and analyze the work of the Inquiry.

The Materials

During three trips to New York and New England the author interviewed the following persons: Rhoda McCulloch, Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Bruno Lasker, S. M. Keeny, Mrs. Abel Gregg, and F. Ernest Johnson. Dr. Johnson, long-time official of the old Federal Council and the new National Council of Churches, was among the early sponsors of the Inquiry. Mrs. Abel Gregg was Executive Secretary of the organization during its last three-year period. Miss McCulloch, Sheffield, and Lasker provided the author what remains of the Inquiry's archives and copies of a number of its published

books and pamphlets. Three of the Inquirers listed in a preceding paragraph are now dead: E. C. Lindeman, L. C. Carter, and Harrison S. Elliott. Dr. Kilpatrick was hospitalized and unable to receive the interviewer.

Although these conversations provided a number of valuable clues and established some interesting friendships, the Inquirers' major contribution to this study came in the materials which they collected and preserved for the author. Lasker had been considering writing a history of the Inquiry, and he had procured the remains of the archives. Some particularly valuable materials included were: the Price-Waterhouse audit reports and reports of the Finance Committee; a number of the annual letters which Carter and Mrs. Gregg wrote to the financial backers; correspondence about various projects; several copies of the MacIver Report[13] and correspondence concerning it; many interoffice memoranda revealing something about the day-to-day work; multiple copies of letters, both those received and those sent out; reports on conferences and other projects; and so forth. Professor Sheffield had not preserved any material of this type. Miss

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[13]Dr. Robert M. MacIver was retained by the Inquiry in 1928 to write an evaluation of the organization and its achievements. His Report on the Inquiry was mimeographed and distributed during the consideration of future programming.

McCulloch did not remember having any, but later she found a box of it stored away in her cellar; of particular note in her collection were the minutes of some of the early meetings and her own notebook of the Columbia course in group leadership taught by Elliott in 1927. Mrs. Gregg found two copies of her manuscript "The Guidance of Conference Groups" and gave them to the author.

Sheffield did have a number of copies of the "little blue books" published by the Inquiry, as well as a copy of The Mind of a "Member."[14] Miss McCulloch had a number of books, including a copy of Parkes's book, International Conferences.[15] Lasker had a number of books, too. Together the Inquirers gave the author almost a complete set of the Inquiry's published materials. Lasker provided a bound copy of all the Occasional Papers; they have been a particularly rich source of materials about the different conferences which the Inquirers arranged, attended, or observed.[16] In addition to this personal collection, the author has been

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[14]Alfred Dwight Sheffield and Ada Eliot Sheffield, The Mind of a "Member" (New York: Exposition Press, 1951).

[15]J. H. Parkes, International Conferences (Geneva: International Student Service, 1933).

[16]The Occasional Papers, a small news-sheet about Inquiry and conference activities, was published from March, 1925 to June, 1930, appearing more or less regularly each month.

able to use that of the University of North Carolina, selected in 1933 as one permanent repository for the published work. A comprehensive survey of this published material appears in Chapter Three.[17]

During the Inquiry's decade, 1922-1933, there was very little critical study of discussion outside that of the Inquirers and their associates. Laura F. Boyer was preparing study outlines for her church groups, basing her approach on Herbart rather than on Dewey.[18] E. E. Hunt published Conferences, Committees, Conventions[19] in 1925, a book which the Occasional Papers of October, 1925 welcomed as a "fine" addition to the growing literature about discussion. Although an experienced conference planner in his own right, Hunt drew heavily on Inquiry materials. In 1929 Frederick Sherwood Dunn[20] and Norman L. Hill[21] both

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[17]See pp. 144-151.

[18]Laura F. Boyer, The Method of the Discussion Group (New York: The National Council, Protestant Episcopal Church, 1924).

[19]Edward Eyre Hunt, Conferences, Committees, Conventions, and How to Run Them (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1925).

[20]Frederick Sherwood Dunn, The Practice and Procedure of International Conferences (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1929).

[21]Norman L. Hill, The Public International Conference (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1929).

published studies of the increasingly important international conferences, but neither presented a study of techniques, though both seemed aware of the need for such a study. Other than these four authors, the work done on discussion in the 1920's and early 1930's came from the Inquirers or from those associated with them. They took the theoretical suggestions of Mary Parker Follett and John Dewey and, spurred on by the Social Gospel, put them into practice. Their work resulted in a widespread dissemination of information and instruction about discussion and in a keen interest in developing and applying new techniques. They found the discussion movement a few challenging suggestions in some difficult books, and they left it a broad-scale attempt to apply and use the new methods in a number of fields, stretching from professional social work and adult education to university education and church school work.

CHAPTER I

THE ROAR OF THE TWENTIES

Although benevolent philanthropists had somewhat insulated them from its clamor, the Inquirers worked in the "Roaring Decade," a time of exuberance, hope, and reckless challenge. Frederick Lewis Allen has written an excellent characterization of the period in his Only Yesterday, "an informal history of the nineteen twenties."[1] His narrative begins in May, 1919 and ends in October, 1929, and the chapter titles chronicle the passage of the years: "Back to Normalcy," "The Big Red Scare," "Harding and the Scandals," "Coolidge Prosperity," "Alcohol and Al Capone," "The Big Bull Market," "Crash!" The problems were immediate, and thinking men could recognize that good solutions demand the best contribution of everyone. Those who began the study of discussion methodology knew John Dewey and Mary Parker Follett and read their books. They heeded the clarion call

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[1]New York: Bantam Books, 1946.

of the Social Gospel and of the Progressives. Beneath all the "ballyhoo" about which Allen wrote lay serious issues and important concepts which were of concern to every literate and sentient man. The Inquirers believed that they were a part of a new era where the science which had so illuminated the physical world could be used to illuminate the social world. They cut themselves off from the past, filled largely now with war, and turned hopefully to the future. Men were to solve their problems without reference to authority, divinity, or traditions. And no man was to be above, or below, another. These ideas were much older than the nineteen twenties. A scant half-century may encompass the discussion movement, but its conceptual foundations had been under construction for some three hundred years.

Fortunately a careful scholar has already traced out the origin and development of the doctrine which is basic to much of modern thought and especially to group discussion theory. In his 1920 study, J. B. Bury has analyzed the various concepts which have persistently remained a part of "the idea of Progress": the good promise of the future, the responsibility of men for his own destiny, the dependence on scientific method. Bury found the origin of the idea in Francis Bacon, who insisted that knowledge is to be used for "the amelioration of human life, to increase men's happiness

and mitigate their suffering,"[2] and in Descartes, who affirmed that reason is supreme and the laws of nature invariable. Thus three of the five essential conditions of the idea of Progress were laid down in the seventeenth century. 1) Science and philosophy had to be liberated from the old theory that the degenerating society awaits an imminent millenium. 2) The value of mundane life had to be frankly recognized and knowledge had to be made subservient to human needs. 3) The laws of nature had to be accepted as invariable in order for science to be set on a sure foundation.[3] Fontenelle laid down the fourth essential condition when he advocated the prospect of an indefinite future awaiting mankind, though he did not view this future as "necessary and certain."[4] This fifth condition, "the vista of an immensely long progressive life in front of humanity," was first expressed by the Abbe de Saint-Pierre in 1737.[5] Thinking men who followed these courageous beginners shared the idea of Progress they helped to create.

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[2]The Idea of Progress (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), p. 52.

[3]Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[4]Ibid., p. 109.

[5]Ibid., p. 136.

The second period in the development of this new idea began when Fourier, Saint-Simon, and Comte set out to remake society on scientific principles. As Bury put it:

> Kant had said that a Kepler or a Newton was needed to find the law of the movement of civilization. Several Frenchmen now undertook to solve the problem. They did not solve it; but the new science of sociology was founded; and the idea of Progress, which presided at its birth, has been its principal problem ever since.[6]

Comte considered his "positivism" the foundation of the new age. In England John Stuart Mill, and subsequently Herbert Spencer, were considerably influenced by Comte. The revolutionary hypothesis of evolution ushered in the third period of the development of the idea of Progress and decisively established its reign.[7] Spencer was the ablest and most influential of those who joined the ideas of Evolution and Progress. Like Mill he was more optimistic than the Frenchmen, believing that evil gradually tends to disappear. He made change the law of all things and progress a necessity. By 1870-1880 the idea had become "a general article of faith."[8] The modern reformers were heirs to a rich heritage. After some three centuries, the this-worldly dreams of the

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[6]Ibid., p. 273.

[7]Ibid., p. 355.

[8]Ibid., p. 346.

rationalists had supplanted the other-worldly dreams of the theologians.

As the idea of Progress crossed the channel into England, so it crossed the Atlantic into the young United States of America. Unfortunately, Professor Bury did not consider the impact of the idea on American culture; this was beyond the scope of his volume, "tracing the origin of the idea and its growth up to the time when it became a current creed."[9] However, when the American edition of Bury's book was published in 1931, Charles A. Beard contributed an illuminating introduction. In it he pointed out that the idea of Progress has exerted "a powerful influence on the development of civilization in the United States."[10] Beard used his famous economic interpretation of American history when he said that Progress was especially appealing to Americans because they had come here for economic reasons. There was no fixed system of land tenure. Natural resources were abundant. American society never had the fixed demarcation lines typical of Europe. The new land appealed to men and women of action who were preoccupied with scientific affairs and largely freed from the educational fetters of

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[9] Ibid., p. 343.

[10] Ibid., p. xxxi.

antiquity. Indeed, the Constitution itself "in fact accepts the fundamental postulate of progress in human affairs."[11] By its inherent flexibility and its provisions for amendment it allowed change to become the rule of American life. Hence it is not extraordinary, said Beard, that two of America's leading philosophers, Emerson and Dewey, should emphasize the social aspects of philosophy and make Progress one of its key features. The Inquirers certainly worked in this American tradition. In his interpretation of the work of the Inquiry, E. C. Lindeman, one of the most perceptive and vocal of them, summarized the work of the organization in a brief paragraph which reveals the sure impact of Progress.

> The key-words for the future, it seems to me are: to control, to relate, and to participate. The first constitutes the social compulsion of our time; we must either learn how to control our society, or become subject to increasingly irrational and coercive forces. But, we can only control rationally by bringing fractional parts of the whole into functional relationship; and, in the end, this means some method which will allow us to participate with each other in a creative manner. Ultimately, the viewpoint which converges at the close of this summary may be stated thus: Human differences should not be feared, or minimized, or evaded; it is through the very interplay of difference that our possibilities for change arise. Without difference there is no growth. But, if difference leads merely to waste and frustration, growth will be fitful, precarious, and unreliable. A creative use of difference may be anticipated when those who are involved in the world's affairs learn

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[11] Ibid., p. xxxv.

> how to inquire candidly and fearlessly into the nature of their own behavior, and then couple this inquiry with a similar concern for those areas of conflict which may be seen as the primary inhibitors of man's progress.[12]

But the staff members of the Inquiry, and the occasional collaborators, were laymen, not scholars, or scientists, or sociologists. They did produce some significant scholarly work. Bruno Lasker's studies in race relations helped to open this field for sociological investigation. Lindeman was among the first to turn his attention to the facts of community life. Sheffield and Elliott produced the first critical analysis of discussion theories and practices. They did call on the resources of the scientists--sociologists, psychologists, and philosophers--and they were instrumental in moving the new insights and knowledge created by science out into the mainstream of social life. They read the books which the scholars and scientists wrote. They wished to emulate the care and precision of the study and the laboratory. Yet they were practical men living in the immediate world of affairs, believing with Dewey and Follett that this is the only real world. And frequently the men who had the most influence on these Inquirers were, like themselves, essentially laymen. In his account of the Inquiry's work Lindeman pointed to five contemporary authors

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[12]Social Education (New York: New Republic, Inc., 1933), p. 186.

who reflected the intellectual temper of the time in which these discussion pioneers worked: Herbert Croly, Walter Lippmann, Waldo Frank, Silas Bent, and Charles A. Beard.[13] A brief summary of their work will reveal the mood of the Inquiry's decade.

I. Herbert Croly, who saw so clearly the promise of American life

Lindeman had a great admiration for Herbert Croly. He suggested that Croly's first book, The Promise of American Life, should be read by anyone who wished to understand the basic theory of integration which the Inquiry elaborated and used. In discussing the sources of the theory, he pointed out:

> Since the integration hypothesis is in this volume related primarily to social affairs the student may wish to begin his analysis at points closer to the social sciences. My attention was first turned in this direction through the influence of the late Herbert Croly. He pointed out to me the fact which has since guided me in numerous searches, namely that the original federalist conception of government as worked out by that early group of fertile thinkers--Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Paine, et cetera--contained within itself the germ of an integrationist theory for politics. Their conception of government of consent, for example, implied the necessity for inventing a consenting procedure, that is, a process of functional unity within diversity.[14]

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[13] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[14] Ibid., pp. 192-193.

Croly had made the keynote address at a Lake Mohonk Conference of the Inquiry in 1924. In it he had challenged the organization to seek "the consequences of Christian truth for man as a member of society."[15] He was one of the prime movers in the early days of the Inquiry and in the reform movement as well. Waldo Frank dedicated his Re-Discovery of America:

> TO HERBERT CROLY whose "Promise of American Life" (1909) laid the foundation, in modern, real terms, for the view of America as a democratic nation led by an aristocracy of spirit, and TO THE EDITORS OF THE NEW REPUBLIC whose generous hospitality made possible the writing of this book.[16]

In an appendix to his book Frank credited Croly with giving birth to a new critical era with the publication of Promise of American Life. Eric F. Goldman, in his study of modern American reform, has written that Croly's book had a profound influence, especially as it was translated into political programming by Theodore Roosevelt in his later years. Roosevelt had taken the book along on his trip to Africa in 1909. Goldman comments:

> The Promise, he announced, was "the most profound and

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[15]"Christianity as a Way of Life," New Republic, XXXI (July 23, 1924), 230-237.

[16](New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. vii.

> illuminating study of our national conditions which has appeared for many years." Soon after Roosevelt's ship had docked, and the wildest reception New York had ever known was over, Croly received the inevitable invitation to come to Oyster Bay for lunch.[17]

Herbert Croly made his stand clear in The Promise of American Life, the book which established his position and made him a well-known critic. He stood for action. Americans he said, have always looked on their country as a land of promise.

> They still believe that somehow and sometime something better will happen to good Americans than has happened to men in any other country; and this belief, vague, innocent, and uninformed though it be, is the expression of an essential constituent in our national ideal. . . . From the beginning Americans have been anticipating and projecting a better future. From the beginning the Land of Democracy has been figured as the Land of Promise.[18]

Yet the average American's understanding of this Promise is blurred; he overlooks his citizenship responsibilities; he often blandly assumes that Destiny will solve his own personal problems as well as those of the nation. Croly disagreed profoundly with this view, and called for "a laborious, single-minded, clear-sighted, and fearless work."[19]

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[17] Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 147.

[18] The Promise of American Life (New York: Macmillan Company, 1909), p. 3.

[19] Ibid., p. 6.

The Promise, defined as "the realization of the democratic ideal," must be sought with vigor and determination. Favored by the protection of the Atlantic Ocean and surrounded by the riches of the wilderness, Americans have had more than their share of the riches of freedom and prosperity. Their achievement has been of great value to themselves, to their nation, and to civilization as well.

But, Croly went on to say, the great abundance of the virgin wilderness has been used and the size and effectiveness of the Atlantic barrier have decreased considerably. Many individual Americans are beginning to find that some are not getting a fair share of the nation's wealth and just treatment by its government. The old drive for individualism has diminished as men see faults in the social and political organizations. Zealous reformers are always ready to support the demands for change. The automatic fulfillment of the American Promise has been called into question. The "old sense of a glorious national destiny" has been transformed into a "serious national purpose."[20] The moral and social benefits of American life can be secured only by converting democracy "from a political system into a construc-

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[20] Ibid., p. 21.

tive social ideal."[21] This ideal is no longer attainable by individual effort and enlightened self-interest. Americans must work together to eliminate the evils they see among themselves.

Croly suggested in this first book that the American solution to the American problem is education.

> The real vehicle of improvement is education. It is by education that the American is trained for such democracy as he possesses; and it is by better education that he proposes to better his democracy. Men are uplifted by education much more surely than they are by any tinkering with laws and institutions, because the work of education leavens the actual social substance. It helps to give the individual himself those qualities without which no institutions, however excellent, are of any use, and with which even bad institutions and laws can be made vehicles of grace.[22]

But Croly was not talking about the old idea that education is a process of teaching an individual discipline and knowledge; he was probably already aware of the educational movement then beginning to form around John Dewey. The nature of education must be considered in relation to the national ideal. "Back of the problem of educating the individual lies the problem of collective education."[23] He went on:

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[21] Ibid., p. 17.

[22] Ibid., p. 400.

[23] Ibid., p. 406.

> The good average American usually wishes to accomplish exclusively by individual education a result which must be partly accomplished by national education. The nation, like the individual, must go to school; and the national school is not a lecture hall or a library. Its schooling consists chiefly in experimental collective action aimed at the realization of the collective purpose. If the action is not aimed at the collective purpose, a nation will learn little even from its successes. If its action is aimed at the collective purpose, it may learn much even from its mistakes. No process of merely individual education can accomplish the work of collective education, because the nation is so much more than a group of individuals.[24]

Here the critic and editor saw the kind of education which the Inquiry was to develop and sponsor in later years.

Even in his next book, Progressive Democracy, published five years later, Croly remained more in the realm of theory than of practice. He did give more stress to the educational value of political experience:

> The type of democratic political organization which has been roughly sketched in the preceding chapters has been characterized as fundamentally educational. Although it is designed to attain a certain administrative efficiency, its organization for efficiency is subordinated to the gathering of an educational popular political experience. Indeed it is organized for efficiency chiefly because in the absence of efficiency no genuinely formative popular political experience can be expected to accrue. It assumes an intrepid and inexhaustible faith in the value to humanity of an ideal of individual and social fulfillment. It assumes collective aspects, to make an effective contribution to the work of fulfillment. It assumes the ability of the human intelligence to frame temporary programs which will provide a sufficient foundation for significant and fruitful action. It anticipates that as the result of such

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[24] Ibid., p. 407.

> action a progressive democracy will gradually learn how to be progressively democratic. But the result of its education will not be the attainment of its ideal of individual and social fulfillment. It will only be at best the conquest of a more liberal life by a larger number of living men and women.[25]

In a final chapter titled "Social Education," Croly turned to the problem itself. This chapter is really a polemic against the privileged few who have accumulated the advantages, educational and other, of their society. Democracy has taken away the privileges and, in so doing, placed in jeopardy all man's social heritage. The old coercions no longer apply.[26] Careful students of society, said Croly, are beginning to fear the disintegrating tendencies of widespread industrialization. He pointed out that both radicals and conservatives recognize the need for social cohesion and the inevitable compulsion which must accompany it. He hastened to add:

> But whatever importance they may attach to compulsion, they propose to supplement it with an attempt to strengthen by educational means the spiritual foundation of society. The increasing clarification and emphasis of this purpose is the salutary and promising aspect of the existing situation. Once it can be clearly understood that whatever else loyal democracy

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[25] Progressive Democracy (New York: Macmillan Company, 1914), p. 378.

[26] Ibid., p. 413.

> may mean and a more exacting ideal of social fulfillment may demand, and whatever else society must do to preserve and promote its own integrity, the creation of an adequate system of educating men and women for disinterested service is a necessary condition both of social amelioration and social conservation--once this underlying condition is fully and candidly accepted, then a fair chance exists of ultimately uniting disinterested and aspiring people upon a practicable method of accomplishing the purpose.[27]

In a democracy no one class can decide upon the solution to common problems and no one group can demand self-restraint of another.

> What the situation calls for is faith. Faith is the primary virtue demanded by the social education of a democracy--the virtue which will prove to be salutary --in case human nature is capable of salvation. Only by faith can be established the invincible interdependence between the individual and social fulfillment, upon the increasing realization of which the future of democracy depends. It consecrates the will to the recognition of the most fundamental and exacting of personal and collective responsibilities. It constitutes the spiritual version of the indomitable instinct which has kept the human race on the road during all the discouragements and the burdens of the past, and which must not be the less indomitable because it becomes the more conscious.[28]

Croly called for a collectivism in which every individual would recognize the fundamental obligation of mutual assistance.

Like John Dewey, Herbert Croly's world-view was man-centered. He was simply working out the implications of his

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[27] Ibid., p. 403.

[28] Ibid., pp. 424-425.

ideological ancestors. He revealed in an occasional comment that he was familiar with Christian doctrine, but the problems he considered were far removed from God. The very language he chose to express his ideas reflected the traditions of the idea of Progress. Democracy is "progressive." Sovereignty is "popular." "Science" is the answer to man's problems. Like so many others in the mainstream of thought, he believed that an improvement in society would inevitably improve man. He recognized the great symbolic significance of the French Revolution, pointing out, for example, that the emerging concept of popular sovereignty was heavily influenced by the Bourbon concept of absolute royal sovereignty.[29] In his first book he expressed his great admiration for scientific method.

> The perfect type of authoritative technical methods are those which prevail among scientific men in respect to scientific work. No scientist as such has anything to gain by the use of inferior methods or by the production of inferior work. There is only one standard for all scientific investigation--the highest standard; and so far as a man falls below that standard his inferiority is immediately reflected in his reputation. Some scientists make, of course, small contributions to the increase of knowledge, and some make comparatively large contributions; but just in so far as a man makes any contribution at all, it is a real contribution; and nothing makes it real but the fact that it is recognized. In the Hall of Science exhibitors do not get their work hung upon the line because it tickles the public taste, or because it is "uplifting," or because

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[29] Ibid., pp. 220 ff.

> the jury is kindly and wishes to give the exhibitor a chance to earn a little second-rate reputation. The same standard is applied to everybody, and the jury is incorruptible. The exhibit is nothing if not true, or by way of becoming or being recognized as true.[30]

Croly went on to admit that a standard in the liberal and practical arts cannot, of course, be applied as rigorously as the standard of scientific truth. But too often the only standard is "that of good enough," and the juries are often too kind.[31] While discussing industrial democracy in the second book, he provided a clear statement of the interdependence of science and democracy. He said:

> Without the help of science the human race would have remained forever the victim of vicissitudes in its supply of food. Without the advent of democracy science would have become merely an engine of class oppression and would have been demoralized by its service. Both expand in an atmosphere of candor, publicity, mutual good faith and fearless criticism. Both shrivel up in a secretive, suspicious, timid and self-regarding atmosphere. Democracy can never permit science to determine its fundamental purpose, because the integrity of that purpose depends finally upon a consecration of the will, but at the same time democracy on its spiritual side would be impoverished and fruitless without science. The fulfillment of democratic purpose depends upon the existence of relatively authentic knowledge, the authority of which a free man may accept without any compromise of his freedom. The acceptance of such authority becomes a binding and cohesive influence. Its representatives can within limits serve the purposes of a

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[30]Croly, Promise of American Life, p. 434.

[31]Ibid., p. 435.

> democratic community without the friction or the irrelevance of an election. Yet just because science is coming to exercise so much authority and be capable of such considerable achievements, a completer measure of industrial and political democracy becomes not merely natural, but necessary. The enormous powers for good and evil which science is bringing into existence cannot be intrusted to the good-will of any one class of rulers in the community. The community as a whole will not derive full benefit from scientific achievements unless the increased power is widely distributed and until all the members share in its responsibilities and opportunities. All along the line science is going to demand of faithful and enlightened men an amount of self-subordination which would be intolerable and tyrannical in any but a self-governing community.[32]

II. Walter Lippman, who finally saw the fatal flaw in Reform

From the publication of his first two books in 1913 and 1914 Walter Lippmann has been a leading critic and journalist. Born in New York City, the only son of a relatively well-to-do family, Lippmann had social and educational advantages from his earliest years. He excelled at Harvard, where he was chiefly interested in political and literary affairs. After graduation in 1910 he was a participant in various aspects of the early reform movement until Herbert Croly invited him to join the staff of The New Republic in 1913. He had already published A Preface to Politics[33] and

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[32]Croly, Progressive Democracy, pp. 404-405.

[33]New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1913.

Drift and Mastery[34] when the journal first appeared in 1914. Like so many sensitive young men of his time, Lippmann was disturbed by the political and social conditions around him. In his introduction to the first book he identified the key problem as "indifference." Yet he recognized that much of the reformer's enthusiasm was aroused over trivia. He was writing, he said, to present his point of view, "a preliminary sketch." And he added cautiously that his own point of view had its limits.[35] In Drift and Mastery he turned more and more to the practical world of affairs, writing of the plight of the muckrakers, the inherent evils in advertising, the problem of industrial democracy. Here he identified the key problems as "chaos," and admonished the younger critics to give their attention to the weaknesses of democracy rather than the evils of authority.[36]

> We have lost authority. We are emancipated from an ordered world. We drift. The loss of something outside ourselves which we can obey is a revolutionary break with our habits. Never before have we had to rely so completely upon ourselves.[37]

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[34]New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1914.

[35]Lippmann, Preface to Politics, pp. v-x.

[36]Lippmann, Drift and Mastery, p. xx.

[37]Ibid., p. 196.

Lippmann felt that an active and vigorous effort was needed to stay the drift.

> To do this men have to substitute purpose for tradition; and that is, I believe, the profoundest change that has ever taken place in human history. We can no longer treat life as something that has trickled down to us. We have to deal with it deliberately, devise its social organization, alter its tools, formulate its method, educate and control it. In endless ways we put intention where custom has reigned. We break up routines, make decisions, choose our ends, select means.[38]

In these first two books Walter Lippmann too accepted the idea of progress, though he probably did not see, at the time, some of its implications. After reading the political theorists, he took the Comte position that a theory must be viewed in the context of its time: "In some such way as this the sophomoric riddle is answered: no thinker can lay down a course of action for all mankind--programs if they are useful at all are useful for some particular historical period."[39] Lippmann had already had enough experience in political affairs to know how real problems pile up before the visionary who has finally got into office. Hence he knew that the success of the reform movement depended on the determination of men to control their destiny. ". . . The tendency of political discussion is to regard government as

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[38]Ibid., pp. 266-267.

[39]Lippmann, Preface to Politics, p. 210.

automatic, a device that is sure to fail or sure to succeed. It is sure of nothing. Effort moves it; intelligence directs it; its fate is in human hands."[40] The answer to the political problem, he said, lies in education and in science, as the following three quotations will indicate:

> The politics of reconstruction require a nation vastly better educated, a nation freed from its slovenly ways of thinking, stimulated by wider interests, and jacked up constantly by the sharpest kind of criticism. It is puerile to say that institutions must be changed from top to bottom and then assume that their victims are prepared to make the change. No amount of charters, direct primaries, or short ballots will make a democracy out of an illiterate people. Those portions of America where there are voting booths but no schools cannot possibly be described as democracies. Nor can the person who reads one corrupt newspaper and then goes out to vote make any claim to having registered his will. He may have a will, but he has not used it.[41]

> There is nothing accidental then in the fact that democracy in politics is the twin-brother of scientific thinking. They had to come together. As absolutism fails, science arises. It <u>is</u> self-government. For when the impulse which overthrows kings and priests and unquestioned creeds becomes self-conscious we call it science.[42]

> For the discipline of science is the only one which gives any assurance that from the same set of facts men will come approximately to the same conclusion. And as the

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[40] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 293.

[41] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 305.

[42] Lippmann, <u>Drift and Mastery</u>, p. 276.

> modern world can be civilized only by the effort of innumerable people we have a right to call science the discipline of democracy. No omnipotent ruler can deal with our world, nor the scattered anarchy of individual temperaments. Mastery is inevitably a matter of cooperation, which means that a great variety of people working in different ways must find some order in their specialties. They will find it, I think, in a common discipline which distinguishes between fact and fancy, and works always with the implied resolution to make the best of what is possible.[43]

To Lippmann the good politician is the man who can take things as they are and shape them for a better future, a man who can cooperate and compromise, a man who recognizes that he is responsible for the future.

As a practicing journalist and as a propagandist for the United States Forces in France, Lippman got a full view of the Great War. His three books in the 1920's reveal a gradual shift in position. Years later he wrote of his own early work:

> About twenty-five years ago I wrote a book called A Preface to Politics, intending at some later time to write the other chapters. The general scheme of the human future seemed fairly clear to me then. I was writing in the heyday of Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism and of Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, and I had no premonition that the long peace which had lasted since Waterloo was soon to come to an end. I did not understand the prophetic warning of my teacher, Graham Wallas, that there might be a war which would unsettle the foundations of society--indeed I was unable to imagine such a war and I did not know what were the foundations which might be unsettled.

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[43] Ibid., pp. 285-286.

> For in that generation most men had forgotten the labors that had made them prosperous, the struggles that had made them free, the victories that had given them peace. They took for granted, like the oxygen they breathed and the solid ground beneath their feet, the first and last things of western civilization. So in writing my Preface I assumed without question that in a regime of personal liberty each nation could, by the increasing exercise of popular sovereignty, create for itself gradually a spaciously planned and intelligently directed social order. So confident was I that this was the scheme of the future that I hurried on to write another book which proclaimed in its title that we had come to the end of the era of drift and were entering the era of our mastery of the social order.[44]

But even in Public Opinion,[45] The Phantom Public,[46] and A Preface to Morals,[47] Lippmann had set a new direction for himself. In the first book he presented the definitive analysis of the subject. He pointed out: "We shall assume that what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him."[48] This, he said, would be the heart of his analysis.[48] But when he had finished, discussing the great inadequacies of the means of communication, of the sensory perceptions, of the barriers to communication, the great trust of the democrat

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[44]The Good Society (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937), p. ix.

[45]New York: Macmillan Company, 1922.

[46]New York: Macmillan Company, 1927.

[47]New York: Macmillan Company, 1929.

[48]Lippmann, Public Opinion, p. 25.

in the people lay exposed in need of re-examination. Indeed in his second book three years later, Lippmann suggested that there is no "public," that there are only groups of particular individuals interested in particular common problems.[49] And when he turned to the third book, he found the great answer to man's woes to be "the religion of the spirit" which all great moralists have posited. Lippmann still believed in democracy, but he laid down in the twenties the broad outlines of the new position which he was to clarify later in The Good Society[50] and The Public Philosophy.[51] In the latter especially he challenged the "men of light and leading" to restore the traditions of civility and the public philosophy and to become the guardians of the order which regulates all rivalries.

What then was Lippmann's position during the decade of the Inquiry? When the Inquirers read him, what did they learn? They learned, first of all, that religion did not bar a relentless search for the facts. As he saw it:

> . . . the modern moralist cannot expect soon to construct a systematic and harmonious moral edifice like that which

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[4] Lippmann, Phantom Public, pp. 40 ff.

[50] Boston: Little, Brown, 1937.

[51] New York: New American Library, 1955.

> St. Thomas Aquinas and Dante constructed to house the aspirations of the mediaeval world. He is in a much earlier phase of the evolution of his world, in the phase of inquiry and prophecy rather than of ordering and harmonizing, and he is under the necessity of remaining close to the elements of experience in order to apprehend them freshly. He cannot, therefore, permit the old symbols of faith and old formulations of right and wrong to prejudice his insight. Insofar as they contain wisdom for him or can become its vehicles, he will return to them. But he cannot return to them with honor or with sincerity until he has himself gone and drunk deeply at the sources of experience from which they originated.[52]

Lippmann knew that the old order based on authority and tradition was giving way to the new order based on scientific facts. He no longer spoke eloquently of the promise in science, but he recognized more and more clearly that the few who are concerned are going to have to be the leaders of the many who are not. He made the word "stereotype" part of the common parlance, insisting that the possibilities that the common people will receive sufficient facts are slim. They are too heavily influenced by the pictures in their own heads, by the deliberate designs of propagandists of all kinds, by the paucity of reliable facts in the mass media of communication. He saw great possibilities in an increased use of social scientists in social and governmental affairs. The "entering wedge" had been those early social scientists like Frederick Taylor who had been called in by businessmen

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[52]Lippmann, Preface to Morals, pp. 323-324.

to consider the problems of industry. But the experimental method holds great promise too for health departments, school districts, state governments. All these efforts are aimed at "interposing some form of expertness between the private citizen and the vast environment in which he is entangled."[53]

III. Waldo Frank, who dreamed of a New America

No one on the Inquiry staff could have written a book like Waldo Frank's Re-Discovery of America. They were social workers in a world of immediate problems; he was somewhat of a mystic, seeking the spirituelle of his time. Yet Frank's book presents another aspect of the mood of the time. There were all sorts of mystics and cultists at work in the twenties. Frank admits that he had "intimate contact" with A. R. Gurage, the American counterpart of Ouspensky, though he insists that he often disagreed with the theosophic cult.[54] Professor Sheffield represented the Inquiry at some of Gurage's sessions, but as he remembers it, this group was only one of many which sought to tap the Inquiry's sources of finance.[55] Frank's language reveals him even as he states

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[53]Lippmann, Public Opinion, p. 378.

[54]Frank, Re-Discovery of America, p. 300.

[55]Sheffield interview with the author, August 31, 1956.

the aim of his book:

> What we require of leadership is clearly the integration of our chaos: its re-birth into organic life by the introduction within it of a fresh germinal force. To this end, first of all, the chaos must be accepted; then, understood and transfigured. To accept is the work of spirit: to understand is the work of mind: to transfigure is the work of art. The American leader must be moved by a religious love in order to accept this chaos--a love like that of Moses, of Jesus; for only in this spirit can he make one and whole the world's deliverance with his own. The American leader must have intellectual mastery of the elements, cultural and technical, that enter in this chaos, for only so equipped can he understand the intricate pasts and presents and futures that America consists of. The American leader must have the imagination of the Whole, for only so can he achieve the method for work within the chaos, to organize it and to transform it.[56]

Yet in his own way, Frank was deeply concerned about the problems of his time: the Machine, political leadership, the place of the American woman, the popularization of culture, spiritual malnutrition. He wrote a chapter on the "death of Europe" and the vast transfer of the world's center of influence from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. He saw America's weaknesses, but he sang praises for her strength. He embraced modern science and made religion somewhat dependent on it. Like all the followers of Comte he suspected that Progress had taken the place of Providence. Yet he insisted that the mystic had something to offer:

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[56]Frank, Re-Discovery of America, p. 178.

> To be unconscious of the Whole is to live in terms of the part as if it were the whole; and this--the way of animals and of practical men--is to be unconscious. To be conscious of the Whole is to live in terms of the Whole expressed through its parts; and this--the way of the mystic and of Man--is to be conscious. America, from its historic outset, has had the mystic tradition: a tradition, that is, which rose from consciousness of the whole of man and of God; which linked the land with all lands and all men; which identified the self of our land with the destiny of human kind.[57]

It was the "practical men" who led the Union into the disintegration of the Civil War; it was the man of vision, Abraham Lincoln, who saved the nation.[58] Frank blasted the muckrakers for their indiscriminate distructiveness; "They lacked above all the lyrism--the afflatus of life."[59] Hence he could applaud Croly's work in The Promise of American Life and at the same time condemn Croly for too much dependence on the efficacy of political means.

In his visionary way Frank saw the need which gave the Inquiry its impetus. He joined Mary Parker Follett in identifying the group as the nation's hope:

> With tragic need, America needs groups. Groups to capture our chaos as consciousness captures the sense.

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[57] Ibid., pp. 212-213.

[58] Ibid., p. 213.

[59] Ibid., p. 313.

> Groups to make bowels and limbs and heart of the American body; to be our brains and our spirit. The method of American life must be the group. . . . Why have we no groups? Why have all the efforts since America began, to form real groups, failed always? Why do modern groups, spiritual, intellectual, artistic, political, drop off or grow rotten or crassify into cliques?[60]

Yet he was not interested in the group process itself and the methods by which it might be improved. He preferred rather to examine the nature of the individual in what he termed "the Whole." He recognized that the most important relations a person establishes are those with the people around him. Being intensely aware of his loneliness and his lack of wholeness, he will seek other men.

> They will flare little fires to each other. They will draw close; they will commune and converge. They will create a group. And this will be a group that can live. Its individuals will be seen with no self-interest to rot their commerce. There will be action in this group, the deed of its luminous mechanics. There will be leadership for the blind American plasm.[61]

Men must move, take action, do things. Frank calls those who will not swerve "from their task of self-creation and leadership." Theirs is a "labor of beauty." They are to find the wholeness in themselves and then bring truth to the world. They will find the true America.

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[60] Ibid., p. 279.

[61] Ibid., p. 309.

IV. Silas Bent, who attempted to fear the Machine, and failed

Like so many critics and thinkers of his time, Silas Bent was disturbed by the vast impact of industrial technology on the affairs and souls of men. Although there is some condemnation implicit in the title of his book, Machine Made Man, he actually took neither side of the machine vs. man controversy. He set his purpose in the Introduction: "to indicate the effect of the industrial revolution upon various departments of man's life, physical, social, commercial, political, and cultural.[62] He more or less made his stand clear in the final paragraph of the introduction:

> Itself a product of human ingenuity, the machine cannot rise above the level of the stream which produced it. If it is elevated to mastery, it must be by man, who is its creator; and that will come only if man accords to it that sort of mystic awe which Zoroastrians give to the Sun, Emersonians to the Oversoul, Catholics to the Virgin, Protestants to the Triune God. The metaphysics of prosperity is a religion of the machine, with Ford and Mellon and Edison as its triune messiah, with Captains of Industry as its hierarchy. So long as the United States continues to prostrate itself before this altar, the machine will continue to be regarded, as it is now, either as a god or a devil. But why dismiss as altogether "ugly" a civilization in which Joseph Pennell found so much of moving beauty? The Machine Age has evolved a new architecture, a new poetry, literature, music, and a fresh exfoliation of the graphic arts. If it has engendered a new religion, all we need in that field, apparently, is a reinvigorated spirit of doubt,

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[62](New York: Farrar, Rinehart, 1930), p. xi.

heresy, iconoclasm.[63]

Although he evidently set out to play the role of the iconoclast, he was at last overwhelmed by the size and promise of his subject. The chapters of Machine Made Man are casually written collections of facts centered around such subjects as food, shelter, politics, entertainment. Bent was somewhat the John Kesbitt of his day; rather than present a cogent analysis he was likely to speak ponderously of the extraordinary facets of "the passing parade": Roman vomitoria, ancient Chinese printing, the gyrosopic compass, the Zeppelin. In a final paragraph he admitted that writing the book had changed his own mind about the Machine.

> An examination of what the machine has done to us and for us, in such physical matters as food and clothes and shelter, in such institutional matters as warfare and education and politics and the daily press, in communication, transportation, commerce and labor, does not leave so bad a taste in the mouth as I, for one, anticipated. In the "intellectual" the machine age provokes the former mood, in its successful captain the latter mood. Neither of them, we may well believe, occupies an invulnerable position. Both of them shoot a little wide of the mark, if they are aiming at a dispassionate audit of our situation.
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> Lord Bryce, who saw clearly the shortcomings of the American commonwealth, as he called it, was still neither dispirited nor pessimistic at what he saw here. Our governmental experiment, which we have undertaken on a larger scale than can be found elsewhere, has been subjected by some critics in this country to severer

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[63] Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.

> indictments than the machine itself; and Emile Faguet, writing of the French Republic, called it "The Cult of Incompetence." At least we may say of the machine, whatever its faults, that it has engendered a cult of competence and efficiency. Whether we will master it in the end, or drift into servility to it, is still a matter of speculation. In speculative jargon, we are safer, I believe, on the bull side of the market.[64]

V. Charles A. Beard, who found in Old America such a contrast to the New

Like the other leading thinkers of his time, Charles A. Beard was a reformer, and his books gave reform a historical foundation and justification. Two of them especially were a key part of the movement, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States[65] and The Rise of American Civilization.[66] According to Eric Goldman these books were Bibles to thousands of students in the 1930's.[67] They were tough realistic books which sought to probe beneath the superficial symbols of the myth and uncover the hard facts of economic and political life. Beard wanted to view the panorama of history in all its significant detail, and

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[64]Ibid., pp. 326-327.

[65]New York: Macmillan Company, 1913.

[66]Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1927),

[67]Howard K. Beale, editor, Charles A. Beard (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), p. 5.

he made economic life a permanent part of the historian's work. He wanted to show how the play was written as well as how it was put on the stage. Max Lerner found his influence on American political thinking "both astringent and invigorating."[63] Beard found the real dynamism of American history in the conflict of group and class interests rather than in the rugged individualism of the frontier. He sought in the real tapestry of history a full understanding of man in America. He knew that Walter Bagehot's promise of the age of discussion had come to pass, and like John Dewey he wanted to apply the method of science to the problems of social America. He, too, wanted to include all the people, as George S. Counts has pointed out:

> One may say that all of his studies, articles, and books, including particularly his textbooks for schools and colleges, were directed toward the goal of popular enlightenment. ... basic article of his faith was that the people could be trusted, if they possessed the knowledge relevant to their interests and purposes.[64]

In his Social Thought in America Morton White considers Beard one of five scholars--Dewey, Holmes, Robinson, Veblen, and Beard--who called the nation to an accounting and

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[63] Ibid., p. 45.

[64] Ibid., p. 232.

sponsored the revolt against formalism.[70]

The significance of Beard's work for the Inquiry and the discussion movement is that he made history a human thing. If a people is going to have to decide, they must understand the forces which created them. This means, among other things, history books which are exciting and palatable to the ordinary citizen. George Bancroft had made man an ally in a divine enterprise. Frederick Jackson Turner had suggested that the rugged individual of the American frontier had provided the essential impetus for the growing nation. Beard answered that every one of the founding fathers had human motivations for private gain which were met by the creation of the Constitution. In other words, they were men too. Perhaps Beard's greatest work was his economic interpretation of the motives which produced the United States Constitution, a book published in 1913. George Soule has described the impact of it.

> The stir caused by this introduction of economic motives into the writing of history was, on the surface, the shocked response of devotees of an American religion. Grimy hands, which had been digging in the muck of past self-interest, were being laid on the Holy of Holies; the shrine of 100 per cent pure American patriotism was being desecrated. If this sacrilege were to be left unpunished by a thunderbolt from heaven, the whole ethic

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[70](Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 46.

of the American Republic was believed to be in danger.[71] Indeed Beard's hands were grimy--he reported that he had used a vacuum cleaner to excavate the ruins of the records he used!![72] One of Beard's great contributions to historiography was that he turned to the raw materials themselves, the original documents which contained the records of government transactions dating back more than a hundred years. In the dusty archives of the Treasury Department he discovered an amazing fact--those who championed the Constitution were a small group who could expect, and did receive, beneficial results from its adoption. The prevailing economic interests in the 1780's "looked to a new national government as the one source of relief and advantage."[73] Only about 160,000 Americans, some five per cent of the population, had even voted on the question of adopting the Constitution, and only 100,000 of them were in favor. The merchants, the property-holders, and the moneyed interests had won, for they were better organized, better informed, and better able to present

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[71]Beale, Charles A. Beard, pp. 61-62.

[72]Beard, Economic Interpretation, p. 22.

[73]Ibid., p. 53.

an effective campaign.[74] Beard's research, and the presentation of such facts as these, threw into high relief the gradual expansion of the electorate in the United States. Indeed, this became one of the dominant motifs in Beard's great synthesis of American History.

It was The Rise of American Civilization which Lindeman recommended as one of the books revealing the mood of the Inquiry's time. Beard and his wife published the two volumes in 1927, and though they eventually published two further volumes in the series, these two remain the center of their life's work. This was exciting history, written with ordinary folks in mind, with a minimum attention to scholarly documentation, a maximum attention to authenticity and detail, and a deliberate and successful attempt to make history as interesting and meaningful as fiction. In a later work Beard wrote:

> Since history encloses all thought and activity to be discussed or described under the head of human affairs, since the validity of any discussion of phases is contingent upon things not discussed, it follows that an inquiry into the possibilities of historical knowledge is the most exigent task for those who are weary of discussions on the level of chatter. The supreme question is, therefore: What can we know about this totality of history and about written or spoken discourses which pretend to describe it or parts of it? That is, on what

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[74] Ibid., p. 140.

> relevant propositions can we obtain a consensus among those competent to discuss it out of knowledge?[75]

Certainly in the books on American civilization he laid open the past for popular inspection. The work chronicles the spread of the voting franchise to the rank and file. The great safeguards which the Founders had put into the Constitution to control the masses fell one by one, in state after state. Within a half a century after the Revolution the frontier farmers were taking political power from the hands of the seaboard economic classes who first held it.[76] In their treatment of the end of the eighteenth century, the Beards told of the drives which finally put Woodrow Wilson in the White House: invention, technology, and capitalist ambition. They told of the great ground swell of reform which made permanent in America the referendum, the recall, direct election of Senators, woman suffrage, the income tax, and the eight-hour day.[77] They concluded:

> Presidents came and went, governors and legislatures came and went, but the movement of social forces that produced this legislation was continuous. It was confined to no party, directed by no single organization,

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[75]The Discussion of Human Affairs (New York: Macmillan Company, 1936), pp. 100-101.

[76]Beard, Rise of American Civilization, I, 542 ff.

[77]Beard, Rise of American Civilization, II, 538 ff.

> inspired by no overpowering leadership. Such were the processes and products of the American democracy when the mind was left free to inspire, to propose, and to champion.[78]

The men who made the Inquiry lived in this time--"the ballyhoo years," Frederick Lewis Allen called them. In Herbert Croly they could see the darkening of the grand old visions of reform; the spokesman himself turned to mysticism and strange cultic practices in his last years. The Republicans moved back into the White House and during the decade insisted that citizens should call first on their own resources. The government's business is to stay out of business. Relieved, the citizens devoted their energies more to play than to work. Not many of them could sustain their thought on a level with Walter Lippmann, who was already speaking sternly to the men of light and leading about their responsibilities. They preferred the easy reading of commentators like Waldo Frank and Silas Bent, or maybe, in a moment of rejuvenated patriotism, the Beards's narratives of their nation's history. What could a dedicated and serious reformer do in times like these? For one thing, he might take his cue from more incisive critics of the scene. During this period John Dewey was at the height of his influence and still an active teacher. His whole philoso-

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[78] Ibid., p. 589.

phy, which he preferred to call "instrumentalism," suggested that the study of methods might provide an answer. In books and lectures and conversations with friends, Mary Parker Follett was suggesting that the answer lay in a reorganization of American society which would harness the group process. And the spark which set off the Inquiry was the Social Gospel, which demanded that Christians translate the principles of Jesus into programs of action. Thus the demands of an educator, a social worker, and a preacher blended to provide the rationale for the Inquiry's study of the discussion method.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS OF THE DISCUSSION MOVEMENT

On August 9, 1922 the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life established an account at the First National Bank in New York City. The organization began as a planning group for a great national gathering of Christians, a meeting to study the application of Christian principles to social, economic, and political problems. The national meeting was never held, and gradually the nature of the organization changed. As it began to call itself "The Inquiry," it continued to sponsor studies of problems on industry, race relations, and international affairs, but its characteristic contribution to various conferences and programs was an emphasis on better means of study, especially the discussion method. The Inquiry staff became known as expert conference consultants. During the Inquiry's decade of life they planned and led many of the important conferences held in the United States and abroad. When the Inquiry passed out of existence in 1933, it left a small shelf of pamphlets and

books reporting the results of its experiments. It sponsored the first efforts to put into practice the suggestions of John Dewey and Mary Parker Follett for careful study of social methodology. As it disappeared a host of organizations--the National Council of Social Work, the Adult Education Association, the Federal Council of Churches, and the Institute of Pacific Relations among them--took up the task of translating the promise of the method into concrete programs of action. During the next decade the reach of the discussion movement broadened until it even included, in World War II, the armed services of the United States. An investigation of the origins of this movement will reveal that the Inquiry continued a tradition which was already well under way by 1922.

The Terms "Discussion" and "Group"

The origins of the "discussion movement" can be traced by analyzing the gradual emergence of a new meaning for the word "discussion," frequently used with another word now also altered in meaning, as "group discussion." It was particularly fitting that Eduard C. Lindeman should write the entry on "discussion" for the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, published in 1934, for, as a participant in Inquiry projects, he had been a perceptive and critical observer of

the movement from the beginning. He was for many years the chief proponent of group discussion usage among the professional social workers. In this article Lindeman continued to use the term to refer to the general process of deliberation which takes place in legislatures, assemblies, and public life, but he went on to point out that this orthodox conception "has been radically altered during the past two or three decades." He said:

> As a social phenomenon discussion implies preceding or potential conflict. In this sense it is an instrument employed to resolve differences prior to overt conflict or a means whereby overt conflict itself is brought to resolution. More rigorously defined discussion is an orderly procedure of oral exchanges between participants involved in an imminent or social conflict, designed to resolve differences and permit joint action.

Discussion is now regarded, he added, as "an instrument of social adjustment," or "an educational tool," and the chairman is an educator rather than a leader seeking followers. The Oxford English Dictionary, published in 1933, did not list this meaning of the term, but it did reveal the long history of the word in its various meanings, dating from the Anglo-Saxon period. It was derived from the Latin verb discutere, meaning to dash or shake to pieces, agitate, disperse, dispel, drive away. Through the centuries various meanings of the term have entered the language and then fallen into disuse. The most popular modern meaning arose in the

mid-sixteenth century: "examination or investigation (of a matter) by arguments for and against; argument with a view to elicit truth or establish a point; a disquisition in which a subject is treated from different sides." Dr. Johnson referred to discussion in 1731 as "the ventilation of a question." The new meaning Lindeman described in his encyclopedia article has not been included in most of the popular dictionaries. The American College Dictionary (1947) makes "discussion" and "debate" synonomous, but it does restrict the synonymity of the terms "argue," "debate," and "discuss."

> --Syn. 1. Argue, debate, discuss imply using reasons or proofs to support or refute an assertion, proposition, or principle. Argue implies reasoning or trying to understand; it does not necessarily imply opposition: "to argue with oneself." To discuss is to present varied opinions and views: "to discuss ways and means." To debate is to interchange formal (usually opposing) arguments, esp. on public questions: "to debate a proposed amendment."

Others, such as Webster's New World Dictionary (1957), make similar distinctions.

Like "discussion," the term "group" has had a long and colorful history in the English language. Its etymological origins are somewhat obscure. In his article in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Edward Sapir pointed out that the term has a wide variety of meanings, but he went on to say: "Any group is constituted by the fact that there is some interest which holds its members together." The Oxford

English Dictionary reported that this meaning, in terms of relatedness of the members rather than of separation from other assemblages, first occurred in Coleridge. It listed as the second occurence Walter Bagehot's statement in 1876 that "man can only make progress in cooperative groups." The Supplement to the Oxford reported a new meaning for the term in psychology: "designating mental processes belonging to the members of a group or community as a collective whole," and provided, among others, several quotations from William MacDougall's Group Mind.[1] In American sociology the term has played a major role since Charles Horton Cooley first wrote of "primary groups" in 1909.[2] In his biography of Cooley, Edward C. Jandy suggested that Cooley probably got the term "primary group" from an earlier work, but he insisted that it was Cooley who made the concept meaningful.[3] There is no doubt that the study of groups has been a major part of sociology and psychology since Cooley's time. In his Social Psychology Floyd Henry Allport restricted himself to the individual-orientation of the traditional psycholo-

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[1]New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920.

[2]Social Organization (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 23.

[3]Charles Horton Cooley (New York: Dryden Press, 1942), p. 181.

gists, but he expressed agreement with those sociologists who emphasize "the function of face-to-face groups, such as the family and the neighborhood group, in the socialization of behavior."[4] He considered at length the impact of the group on individual behavior, reporting on a number of experiments completed by psychologists and sociologists. There was for many years a considerable agitation against "the group mind fallacy," in which Allport, Robert MacIver, and others attacked the position held by MacDougall. MacDougall used the term "group," however, to refer to large social aggregates such as nations. In his Group Mind there are no indications that he knew of the work of Cooley, MacIver, and other American sociologists. The concept of the group mind has been pretty generally discredited, but the concept of the primary group has remained one of the chief interests of sociological research.

Walter Bagehot, nineteenth century English economist and political theorist, was outstanding among those who popularized the use of the word "discussion" in its modern meaning, "careful public consideration of public affairs," though he only hinted at the sociologists' use of the term "group." In fact, in his Physics and Politics, a series of

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[4](Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1924), p. 384.

essays on the impact of the natural sciences on the conduct of public affairs, he predicted that the age of custom was giving way to the "age of discussion." "It was 'government by discussion' which broke the bond of ages and set free the originality of mankind."[5] He traced the propensity for discussion to the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome and to the Germanic custom of allowing the king to rule only in conjunction with his council. He looked on the village discussion in the marketplace as the proper origin for political sentiment. Indeed, his admiration for English political society arose from the fact that the public there was likely to discuss the public issues. He stated:

> . . . I believe the reason of the English originality to be that government by discussion quickens and enlivens thought all through society; that it makes people think no harm may come of thinking; that in England this force has long been operating, and so it has developed more of all kinds of people ready to use their mental energy in their own way, and not ready to use it in any other way, than a despotic government. And so rare is great originality among mankind, and so great are its fruits, that this one benefit of free government probably outweighs what are in many cases its accessory evils. Of itself it justifies, or goes far to justify, our saying with Montesquieu, "Whatever be the cost of this glorious liberty, we must be content to pay it to heaven."[6]

He believed that the habit of discussion nurtured that qual-

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[5] Physics and Politics (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1873), p. 214.

[6] Ibid., p. 204.

ity of character which he termed "animated moderation," and he believed that the English were superior to all others in this respect. Bagehot recognized that wide-spread public discussion freed the merchants of disorder to do their work, and he suggested that a democratic society was more likely to be destroyed from within than from without.[7] But he insisted that the risk is worth the gain. He most clearly revealed his own position regarding the value of discussion and the nature of the group in the following paragraph; it reveals too that he almost broke from the usual meaning of the terms into that new meaning given to them by Mary Parker Follett and the Inquiry.

> The progress of man requires the cooperation of men for its development. That which any one man or any one family could invent for themselves is obviously exceedingly limited. And even if this were not true, isolated progress could never be traced. The rudest sort of cooperative society, the lowest tribe and the feeblest government, is so much stronger than isolated man, that isolated man (if he ever existed in any shape which could be called man), might very easily have ceased to exist. The first principle of the subject is that man can only make progress in "cooperative groups"; I might say tribes and nations, but I use the less common word because few people would at once see that tribes and nations are cooperative groups, and that it is their being so which makes their value; that unless you can make a strong cooperative bond, your society will be conquered and killed out by some other society which has such a bond; and the second principle is that the

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[7] Ibid., p. 181.

> members of such a group should be similar enough to one another to cooperate easily and readily together. The cooperation in all such cases depends on a felt union of heart and spirit; and this is only felt when there is a great degree of real likeness in mind and feeling, however that likeness may have been attained.[8]

Bagehot was keenly aware of the place of public discussion in a democracy, and he was probably the first to suspect the existence of "the group process."

In the generation of theorists and teachers who followed Walter Bagehot, Graham Wallas took the meaning of the terms "discussion" and "group" considerably further. In his first book, Human Nature in Politics, he examined the import of the new psychology for politics, considering such problems as representative government and political morality, and the effect of modern industrialization, communication, and transportation on the political fabric of society. But his frame of reference in this book remained exclusively the individual. As he summarized it:

> So those who would increase the margin of safety in our democracy must estimate, with no desire except to arrive at truth, both the degree to which the political strength of the individual citizen can, in any given time, be actually increased by moral and educational changes, and the possibility of preserving or extending or inventing such elements in the structure of democracy as may present the demand upon him being too great

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[8] Ibid., p. 212.

for his strength.[9]

However, in his next book, The Great Society, Wallas began to speak of "group discussion" and to suggest that the organization of business and government needed careful study and possible change. He suggested that the art of oral dialectic had fallen into decay before the great onrush of mechanical inventions and the enormously expanded quantitative spread of knowledge. He believed we should explore again the "magnificent possibilities of fertility" which lay within the lost art. He suggested that it demanded careful preparation and free and spontaneous participation. He looked to the past to find the paradigm.

> Of these older forms of organization, the simplest and oldest is that which is constituted by a small number of persons--from two to perhaps seven or eight--who meet together for the purpose of sustained oral discussion. This form may be studied at the finest point of development in the dialogues of Plato. It is, as the Greeks knew, extraordinarily difficult. At first sight it might appear that the main condition of its success is that it should be as little 'organized' as possible, that the group should meet by accident, and that each member of the group should freely obey his casual impulses both in speaking and in remaining silent. But a closer examination shows that the full efficiency of argument, carried on even by the most informal body of friends, requires not only that each should be master of the most delicate shades of the same language, and that each should be accustomed to make use of similar rules of thought, but that they should have a large body of

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[9]Human Nature in Politics (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1921), pp. 253-254.

> knowledge in common, that each should be familiar with the peculiar strength and weakness of each of the others, and, above all, that each should be influenced by the same desire to follow truth 'whithersoever the argument may lead.' All this requires that the group should consist, not of men of average powers who have come accidentally together, but of men selected (as Socrates, for instance, selected his disciples) in some way which should secure that the worst of them should possess a rather unusual share of natural ability, acquired training, and interest in ideas. And normally, the necessary discipline and concentration cannot be secured unless some one of the party is accepted by the others as a leader, and does not abuse his position. Philosophy, in the widest sense of the term, began in such group-discussion.[10]

By 1921, when he published Our Social Heritage, Dallas had fully differentiated "individual thought" and "cooperative thought." He wrote, at the beginning of Chapter Three, "Group Cooperation":

> In the last chapter I discussed certain socially inherited expedients by which the work and thought of individual human beings can be directed. In this chapter I shall discuss certain socially inherited expedients by which human beings can direct their behavior when cooperating in groups. I use the word group in a strictly quantitative sense, to mean a body of human beings numbering from three or four up to about thirty or forty. That number seems to have been the ordinary limit of cooperation by primitive mankind; and the natural range of our senses and memory makes it easy for us to see, hear, and recognize, that number of our fellows. I shall postpone to later chapters the discussion of cooperation among bodies of men, like nations or associated nations, whose numbers far exceed

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[10] The Great Society (New York: Macmillan Company, 1914), pp. 242-243.

such a limit.[11]

He went on to analyze carefully the published material on Britain's disastrous Dardanelles campaign of World War I, and he suggested that "the Dardanelles disaster was caused in large part by the fact that the conditions of oral discussion between politicians and experts were not properly analyzed."[12] The civilian and military leaders of the War Council had been unaware that each held a different conception of their essential relationship to each other. In other words, they had failed to understand the nature of "thought cooperation" or "group discussion." Wallas had come to use the terms as they are used today by the leaders of the discussion movement.

In America Woodrow Wilson was among the first to give wide recognition to the place of public discussion in democracy. In the 1912 campaign he asserted that the old Hamiltonian idea of rule by the few was giving way to the New Freedom, which arose from the rule by the many. He wanted all the American people included in the participant electorate. Defining freedom as "perfect adjustment of human interests and human activities and human energies,"

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[11] Our Social Heritage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), p. 54.

[12] Ibid., p. 73.

he suggested that the methods of politics should release the vital energies of the people.[13] He concluded his speech on "The Parliament of the People":

> So, at this opening of a new age, in this its day of unrest and discontent, it is our part to clear the air, to bring about common counsel; to set up the parliament of the people; to demonstrate that we are fighting no man, that we are trying to bring all men to understand one another; that we are not the friends of any class against any other class, but that our duty is to make classes understand one another. Our part is to lift so high the incomparable standards of the common interest and the common justice that all men with vision, all men with hope, all men with the convictions of America in their hearts, will crowd to that standard and a new day of achievement may come for the liberty which we love.[14]

Some of the influence of this speech can be seen in the fact that Glenn Frank chose its title for a significant article he wrote in the July, 1919 Century Magazine.[15] According to the Department of Agriculture's 1942 discussion bibliography, this article presents the best review of the discussion movement during the first two decades of the twentieth century.[16] Frank wanted to restore the habit of

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[13] The New Freedom (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1916), p. 283.

[14] Ibid., p. 110.

[15] pp. 401-416.

[16] Group Discussion and Its Techniques, a Bibliographical Review (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1942).

community discussion to the rank and file of the people, and he saw in the open forums, the lyceums, and the chautauquas a great potential for public education. He suggested as a solution to the problem that a corps of lecturers should be trained to take the facts and the necessary skills to the many communities which needed them. They should set out to refurbish what Wilson had called "the processes of common counsel." But Frank's solution differed radically from that offered by the Inquirers, who preferred to depend, first, on the resources in the people themselves.

John Dewey and the Discussion Movement

It is natural to assume that, of all Americans, John Dewey would be foremost among the pioneer proponents of discussion, for he was always associated with the forces that created it. For half-a-century most of the controversy about education centered around him as Kilpatrick and the other disciples put his theories into practice. Dewey may not have been so effective as a classroom speaker, but in his books he gave the discussion movement substance, dimension, and depth. He wrote shelves of books, and there have been shelves of books written about him. Indeed, the most recent bibliography of work by and about Dewey is itself a

sizeable volume.[17] He was always found at the center of those who wanted to spur the people into action. As Henry Steele Commager has pointed out:

> So faithfully did Dewey live up to his own philosophical creed that he became the guide, the mentor, and the conscience of the American people; it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that for a generation no major issue was clarified until Dewey had spoken. Pioneer in educational reform, organizer of political parties, counselor to statesmen, champion of labor, of women's rights, of peace, of civil liberties, interpreter of America abroad and of Russia, Japan, China, and Germany to the American people, he was the spearhead of a dozen movements, the leader of a score of crusades, the advocate of a hundred reforms. He illustrated in his own career how effective philosophy could be in that reconstruction of society which was his preoccupation and its responsibility.[18]

Early in his long and active life, Dewey became known as the philosopher of democracy and freedom. He believed that man was at last able to solve his problems, if he would only use scientifically the full resources of the mind. Another eminent critic of the American scene has summarized Dewey's essential position:

> America's most eminent and original philosopher, John Dewey, had long taught that conflict is a condition of thinking and of progress, that science is essentially a method, that values and standards exist for man, that man does not exist for standards. Dewey pointed out, in his penetrating little volume, Individualism Old and New,

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[17] Wilton Halsey Thomas, A Bibliography of John Dewey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939).

[18] The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 100.

> that most Americans were still trying to think in patterns that no longer squared with realities; that conflicts and confusions would continue as long as men and women clung to, and tried to find solutions in, the old individualism; that a recognition of the basically collective character of our culture was indispensable to the solution of conflicts; and that the growth of all individuals, the realization of the democratic ideal, might be achieved through intelligence. If truth at any moment is relative, he continued, if the only certainty is change and the power of intelligence to direct change for desired human ends, if the only certainty, in short, lies in method or rather in human ends utilizing that method, then it is not necessary to feel lost, helpless, and utterly at sea. In his conception of the universe in temporal and natural rather than in absolute and spiritual terms, Dewey gave one answer to the quest for certainty.[19]

Yet, strange as it may seem, John Dewey never turned his full attention to "group discussion" itself, to the practical implications of his philosophical premises. One can find scattered through his books an occasional reference to the terms. In 1900 he wrote an essay on "Stages of Logical Thought" in which he asserted that ideas should be used as instruments and that the essential function of thought is inquiry. Like Bagehot and Wallas he looked into the past, and like them he saw discussion as the scientific way of solving problems.

> Discussion is thus an apt name for this attitude of thought. It is bringing various beliefs together, shaking one against another and tearing down their rigidity. It is conversation of thoughts; it is

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[19]Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943), pp. 715-716.

> dialogue--the mother of dialectic in more than the etymological sense. No process is more recurrent in history than the transfer of operations carried on between different persons into the area of the individual's own consciousness. The discussion which at first took place by bringing ideas from different persons into contact, by introducing them into the forum of competition, and by subjecting them to critical comparison and selective decision, finally became a habit of the individual with himself. He became a miniature social assemblage, in which pros and cons were brought into play struggling for the mastery--the final conclusion. In some such way we conceive reflection to be born.[20]

In the first two decades of this century Dewey made the problems of education his chief concern, and two of the books he published in those years, How We Think and Democracy and Education, have become classics in the field. In the 1920's he did turn to political problems and published in 1927 a book titled The Public and Its Problems. In it he presented a position which became a basic postulate of the Inquiry.

> The essential need, in other words, is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion. That is the problem of the public. We have asserted that this improvement depends essentially upon freeing and perfecting the processes of inquiry and of dissemination of their conclusions. Inquiry, indeed, is a work which devolves upon experts. But their expertness is not shown in framing and executing policies, but in discovering and making known the facts upon which the former depend. They are technical experts in the sense that scientific investigators

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[20] Essays in Experimental Logic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), pp. 194-195.

> and artists manifest **expertise**. It is not necessary that the many should have the knowledge and skill to carry on the needed investigations; what is required is that they have the ability to judge of the bearing of the knowledge supplied by others upon common concerns.[21]

Like the earlier writers on discussion, Dewey saw the larger challenge to be the release of the vital energies of the people, and he suggested that new means must be found for realizing the "democratic public." But he pointed out that he was concerned about "the intellectual antecedents" rather than the method itself.[22] At one point he specifically said: "It is outside the scope of our discussion to look into the prospects of the reconstruction of face-to-face communities."[23]

However, John Dewey worked out the fundamental position which made the Inquiry's research into methods and techniques both possible and necessary. He believed in a man-centered universe, and he knew that men could successfully live together only if they employed the full resources of their minds. "Intelligence" played such an important

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[21] (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1927), pp. 208-209.

[22] Ibid., p. 185.

[23] Ibid., p. 213.

role in Dewey's thought that Ratner titled his compilation of Dewey's important writings: Intelligence in the Modern World.[24] Looking back on his long and vigorous participation in social affairs, Dewey wrote of intelligence in 1948:

> It is a shorthand designation for great and ever-growing methods of observation, experiment, and reflective reasoning which have in a very short time revolutionized the physical and, to a considerable degree, the physiological conditions of life, but which have not as yet been worked out for application to what is itself distinctively and basically human. It is a newcomer even in the physical field of inquiry; as yet it hasn't developed in the various aspects of the human scene. The reconstruction to be undertaken is not that of applying "intelligence" as something ready-made. It is to carry over into any inquiry into human and moral subjects the kind of method (the method of observation, theory as hypothesis, and experimental test) by which understanding of physical nature has been brought to its present pitch.[25]

In another book, published in 1929, Dewey gave a fuller explanation of his thoroughgoing experimentalism.

> Here is where ordinary thinking and thinking that is scrupulous diverge from each other. The natural man is impatient with doubt and suspense; he impatiently hurries to be shut of it. A disciplined mind takes delight in the problematic, and cherishes it until a way out is found that approves itself upon examination. The questionable becomes an active questioning, a search; desire for the emotion of certitude gives place to quest

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[24] New York: Modern Library, 1939.

[25] Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York: New American Library, 1950), p. 10.

> for the objects by which the obscure and unsettled may be developed into the stable and clear. The scientific attitude may almost be defined as that which is capable of enjoying the doubtful; scientific method is, in one aspect, a technique for making a productive use of doubt by converting it into operations of definite inquiry. No one gets far intellectually who does not "love to think," and no one loves to think who does not have an interest in problems as such. Being on the alert for problems signifies that mere organic curiosity, the restless disposition to meddle and reach out, has become a truly intellectual curiosity, one that protects a person from hurrying to a conclusion and that induces him to undertake active search for new facts and ideas. Skepticism that is not such a search is as much a personal emotional indulgence as is dogmatism. Attainment of the relatively secure and settled takes place, however, only with respect to specified problematic situations; quest for certainty that is universal, applying to everything, is a compensatory perversion. One question is disposed of; another offers itself and thought is kept alive.[26]

John Dewey spent his life tilting with the spectator concept of knowledge which lay behind so much of contemporary education practice. He recognized change as a first principle, and he recognized further man's potential ability to direct the process in the desirable direction. The truly modern man is the man of action, not the man of contemplation. And it is only inasmuch as he interacts with other men that the man of action can realize his full potential of humaneness.

Dewey's great contribution to the discussion

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[26]The Quest for Certainty (New York: Minton Balch Co., 1929), p. 220.

movement is that he created the paradigm of thought which is now widely used in teaching discussion. When he wrote How We Think in 1910, however, he was not concerned with "the process of group thinking." In it, rather, he sought a clue of unity in the rapid multiplication of studies which was so prominent in the schools of the time. In the preface he wrote:

> This book represents the conviction that the needed steadying and centralizing factor is found in adopting as the end of endeavor that attitude of mind, that habit of thought, which we call scientific. This scientific attitude of mind might, conceivably, be quite irrelevant to teaching children and youth. But this book also represents the conviction that such is not the case; that the naive and unspoiled attitude of childhood, marked by ardent curiosity, fertile imagination, and love of experimental inquiry, is near, very near, to the attitude of the scientific mind. If these pages assist any to appreciate this kinship and to consider seriously how its recognition in educational practice would make for individual happiness and the reduction of social waste, the book will amply have served its purpose.[27]

Dewey found the clue of unity he sought in what he termed "reflective thought." He suggested that all teachers should devote themselves to teaching their students that doubt is sometimes a heavy burden, but that only systematic and protracted inquiry leads to its resolution. In this little volume he laid down the essential outline of the doctrine

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[27]How We Think (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1910), p. iii.

which gradually became famous as "instrumentalism." After considering various examples of thinking, he suggested that reflective thought follows a pattern of five separate stages. The following is one of the best-known paragraphs of all Dewey's writings:

> Upon examination, each instance reveals, more or less clearly, five logically distinct steps: i) a felt difficulty; ii) its location and definition; iii) suggestion of possible solution; iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief.[22]

In the lengthy explanation which followed this definition, Dewey stated that the disciplined and effective mind would not necessarily follow the five stages exactly. "What is important is that the mind should be sensitive to problems and skilled in methods of attack and solution."[23] Although Step Two is the crucial one in critical inference, it is frequently overlooked. Steps One and Two are frequently fused together. It is important in Step Three that a variety of alternative suggestions be considered. In Step Four, the reasoning step, the implications of the developing idea are worked out and the hypothesis formulated. Step

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[22] Ibid., p. 72.

[23] Ibid., p. 73.

Five may be accomplished by observation, or, in more complicated situations, controlled experiment. Observation becomes especially important at the beginning and at the end of the process, to determine precisely the nature of the difficulty and to test adequately the chosen solution or conclusion.

Looking back on eighty years of life, Dewey spoke, at his 1[illegible]3[illegible] birthday celebration, of

> . . . the issue to which this country committed itself when the nation took shape--the creation of democracy, an issue which is now as urgent as it was a hundred and fifty years ago when the most experienced and wisest men of the country gathered to take stock of conditions and to create the political structure of a self-governing society.[30]

He termed democracy "a personal way of individual life," motivated by the citizen's deep and abiding faith in himself. He called for modern Americans to master the moral frontiers as their forefathers mastered the geographical and physical frontiers. This mastery demanded a wise use of effective method.

> For what is the faith of democracy in the role of consultation, of conference, of persuasion, of discussion, in formation of public opinion, which in the long run is self-corrective, except faith in the capacity of the intelligence of the common man to

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[30] Sidney Rattner, editor, The Philosopher of the Common Man (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), p. 220.

> respond with common sense to the free play of facts and ideas which are secured by effective guarantees of free inquiry, free assembly, and free communication? I am willing to leave to upholders of totalitarian states of the right and the left the view that faith in the capacities of intelligence is utopian. For the faith is so deeply embedded in the methods which are intrinsic to democracy that when a professed democrat denies the faith he convicts himself of treachery to his profession.[31]

Although Dewey continued his active intellectual work for another decade--he died in 1952 at the age of 92--this stands as a fitting final statement. Charles A. Beard had ably and conclusively demonstrated the nature of the nation at its founding; Dewey had spent his life comprehending the nature of the nation in his own time. Dewey, too, believed in the parliament of the people. And he was among those who recognized that the people would have to use a different approach to social problems. He wrote, in the preface to the Inquiry's record of the first discussion course:

> It marks a genuine discovery to perceive, as Mr. Sheffield and his associates have done, that minutes and reports of boards and organizations have behind them an interplay of human feeling and thought, a consolidation of experiences, and that by thoughtful attention to the developing and ordering of this interplay, a genuine educative service may be rendered. In the happy words of Mr. Sheffield, it is possible to find discussion methods that in closing incidents will

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[31] Ibid., p. 224.

open closed minds.[32]

When the Inquiry began its work in 1922, what George C. Homans has called "the human group" had been isolated and studied, particularly by the early psychologists. The results of their studies, however, were various and widely scattered, and not readily available to men of action who faced immediate problems. "Discussion," too, had been isolated as a human phenomenon, although in its more popular usage it had not yet been associated with the term "group." It had been studied less carefully, but the early visionaries were keenly aware of the possibilities. Those who constituted the Inquiry, however, had a different answer from that of Glenn Frank, who wanted to form and to train a band of professional lecturers to give the people the facts and the understanding they needed so badly. If they had had only the work of Bagehot, Wallas, Wilson, Dewey, and the early psychologists and sociologists, the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life might never have become the Inquiry. The great vision of a national in-gathering of Christians who would find and apply the principles of Jesus might never have given way

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[32]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Training for Group Experience (New York: The Inquiry, 1929), p. xii.

to the firm conviction that all men in a democracy must seek cooperative methods of living together. But the Inquirers were also heavily influenced by the work of Mary Parker Follett and Walter Rauschenbusch. Drawing where she could from the work which had been done up to that time, Miss Follett dared to suggest that group organization is the hope for democracy, that all men have great untapped potentials of intelligence and social usefulness, that the way to save the nation is the way of group discussion. The Reverend Rauschenbusch had, some twenty years before, been put at the head of a new movement in American Protestantism which came to be called "the Social Gospel." He suggested that the churches were going to have to take the lead in ameliorating the terrible social, economic, and political conditions which surrounded them. He and his disciples formed, among other organizations, the Federal Council of Churches and the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life. As they set out to solve social problems "in the light of the principles of Jesus," it is only natural that they turned to the young sciences of psychology and sociology for enlightenment and understanding. The vital impetus came from those who felt impelled to reform the world. The basic orientation came from those who would

use the methods of science in all realms of men's affairs.

Mary Parker Follett and the Group Principle

On December 20, 1933 the New York Times reported the death of Mary Parker Follett, civic leader of Boston. It cited her life of service in various enterprises, including the National Community Center Association and her lectures and consultations with businessmen on personnel problems. Though her books, The New State[33] and Creative Experience[34] were widely read during the 1920's, she has been largely ignored by those who study the history of the discussion movement. Two collections of her lectures have been published since her death, and both are still in print.[35] Like H. A. Overstreet in the following generation, Miss Follett wanted to make psychological knowledge available for widespread use. She studied Gestalt and Freudian psychology, the work of Edwin Holt, H. Koffka, E. J. Kempf, and others, and tried to find in their work adequate

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[33]New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1918.

[34]New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1924.

[35]Dynamic Administration (Edited by Henry C. Metcalf and L. Urwick; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), and Freedom and Coordination (Edited by L. Urwick; London: Management Publications Trust, 1949).

answers to the problems of society. She was among the first and most distinguished graduates of Radcliffe College, where her interest in history and government had led to the publication of a book on The Speaker of the House of Representatives. Yet she was no "ivory tower theorist." From 1900 to her death in 1933 she played a key role in the civic affairs of her city. Beginning in 1925, she was a participant in the annual conferences of the Bureau of Personnel Administration, under the direction of Dr. Henry C. Metcalf. She lectured extensively before business and professional groups in the United States and England. During the 1920's Miss Follett was one of that group of liberals who started the discussion movement. Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Eduard C. Lindeman, and Herbert Croly were among her personal friends. Her books were a part of the "shared reading" of those who worked out the Inquiry's techniques of discussion. A brief summary of the nature of her "group principle" will reveal the significance of her work for the discussion movement.

Mary Parker Follett's concept of the individual

Miss Follett believed that the growth of democracy and the increase of true individualism were simultaneous occurrences. In a number of movements she saw evidence of an increasing appreciation of the place of the individual

in society, the movement toward industrial democracy, the woman movement, the increase of direct government, and the introduction of social programs into party platforms.[36] Being heavily influenced by Freud and his followers, she viewed the individual as a small sum total of his society, actually never alone or set apart. "A man is a point in the social process rather than a unit in that process, a point where forming forces meet straightway to disentangle themselves and stream forth again."[37] She spoke in terms of "the multiple man" who is enriched by the many ever-changing relationships which make up his life with others. She marveled that the human spirit could remain unimpaired, unexhausted, and undivided as it changed constantly to meet each new relationship.[38] To Miss Follett, then, the real problem of freedom becomes one of providing each individual with opportunities for releasing his personal power. She wanted to make the dynamic and creative individual, "the crescent self," sovereign over himself and the state, and to let him work out his sovereignty in the natural way,

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[36]Follett, New State, p. 171.

[37]Ibid., p. 60.

[38]Ibid., p. 318.

through the groups he forms. As she described it:

> Individuality is the capacity for union. The measure of individuality is the depth and breadth of true relation. I am an individual not as far as I am apart from but as far as I am a part of other men. Evil is non-relation. The source of our strength is the central supply. You may as well break a branch off the tree and expect it to live. Non-relation is death.[39]

Mary Parker Follett's concept of the group

Though she found it quite inadequate in certain respects, Miss Follett turned to Gestalt psychology for an understanding of the nature of the group. To her the term meant much more than a mere assemblage of people--a "crowd," a "mob," or a "herd." A "crowd" is a number of people forming an undifferentiated whole which may be drawn together by a common interest, or pushed together by some outside authority. When this undifferentiated mass is activated and actuated by a common emotion, it becomes a "mob," which need not necessarily be considered evil; it may, for example, be directed toward some heroic act. The "herd" is a number of people joined to find "the comfort of fellowship." When the crowd, the mob, or the herd becomes creative and progressive in an orderly search for a solution

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[39] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

to a problem, it assumes the identity of a group.[40] The group must be defined in terms of relationships as well as of numbers. These relationships bind the members together and direct them toward their goal, providing, for each, new and satisfying opportunities for self-creation. In one chapter of The New State Miss Follett identified the secret of progress:

> We cannot, however, mould our lives each by himself; but within every individual is the power of joining himself fundamentally and vitally to other lives, and out of this vital union comes the creative power. Revelation, if we want it to be continuous, must be through the community bond. No individual can change the disorder and iniquity of this world. No chaotic mass of men and women can do it. Conscious group creation is to be the social and political force of the future. Our aim must be to live consciously in more and more group relations and to make each group a means of creating. It is the group which will teach us that we are not puppets of fate.[41]

Though she was well aware that her position was quite different from the traditional one, Miss Follett could see "the group principle" at work all around her, in each of the broad trends which made "the people" a more intimate part of "the government." The New State carried the subtitle: "Group Organization the Solution of Popular Govern-

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[40] Ibid., pp. 3 ff.

[41] p. 101.

ment." Neighborhood and occupational groups should become the basis of "the new state."

Mary Parker Follett's concept of integration

Miss Follett had seen discussion after discussion fail because the group members did not realize that agreement is a created thing. She called the process the group followed an "integration," a process both creative and dynamic. Rather than adjust to each other, the participants take part in a creative act producing a common decision. This pattern of participation is a complex web of reciprocal relationships. To Mary Follett the circular response just being discovered in the nervous system is similar to the responses of different people to each other. She pointed out that "through circular response we are creating each other all the time."[42] Each side of a social conflict is altered by the other and by the conflict between them. Integration is far superior to the two other methods of settling disagreements, domination or compromise, though it is least often achieved. Miss Follett disliked both the alternatives for, in each, individuals had to give up a part of their desires, often at a heavy expense in individual

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[42] Creative Experience, p. 62.

integrity, and temporary adjustments merely postpone the real issues until a future meeting. Integration puts a premium on creative response, and thus assures a more lasting group decision.[43] Miss Follett looked on integration as much more than an intellectual concept in the realm of ideas; she suggested that genuine integration occurs best in the realm of activities.[44] As men more successfully achieve coordinated activity, they more successfully create the sense of personal power which comes from that activity. In their shared experience they find real sympathy which is much more than a distant concern. Each person in a group finds a new confidence, in himself and in his fellow members. He does not have to change his religious faith or his occupational status in order to cooperate with his neighbors. The chief problem a group faces are those of better means of living together.

Mary Parker Follett's concept of discussion

The method of achieving this "group creativeness," or integration, is group discussion. Even though Mary Parker Follett was always concerned with improving the

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[43] Dynamic Administration, pp. 31 ff.

[44] Creative Experience, p. 150.

group process, and even though she more than anyone else worked out the political and social implications of group organization, she never wrote a handbook of discussion or a discussion guide. Her concern was more with the rationale than with the techniques of group discussion. Yet she was deeply conscious of the need for training in discussion methods, and she repeatedly suggested that the art of cooperative thinking should be taught, just like the art of speaking or writing. She wanted more scientific investigation of group relations. She saw the practical problems involved. She suggested that in a discussion the real issues should be brought out into the open early. The demands of each participant should be broken into the constituent parts, emphasizing the significant rather than the dramatic features. Yet the whole situation must be kept in mind, and those who guide the discussion should anticipate the various responses and the incipient conflicts. The group should zealously guard against being disrupted by any kind of external authority.[45] Such an approach, of course, puts heavy demands on the participants, yet the gains are worth the effort. Discussion encourages clear thinking and the search for accurate information. It helps to overcome

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[45] Dynamic Administration, pp. 36 ff.

misunderstanding and conquer prejudice. It brings real differences to light. In the group process the emotional heat or fury that surrounds a problem is released before a decision must be made. And it inevitably brings people closer together, encouraging them to come together again when other problems confront them.[46] These values are never gained easily, and the group process demands a new kind of leadership. The discussion leader is one who understands the nature of the group and always stands ready to keep it going in a fruitful direction. Even fact-experts must become participants in the group process, and the leader is the one holding ultimate responsibility for the integrity of the process itself.

Recognizing the rise of popular government, Walter Bagehot had promised that mankind would enter "the age of discussion," having left "the age of custom" behind. Graham Wallas and the early sociologists had suggested that the primary group was the fundamental unit of all human society. Woodrow Wilson, scholar, educator, and statesman, having studied these writers, challenged the citizens of his country to set up the parliament of the people and to refurbish the processes of common counsel. Many leading

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[46] New State, pp. 210 ff.

figures of the time must have agreed with Glenn Frank that the age-old answer to the crisis was the best one, namely, train an elite to educate and to govern. John Dewey's answer, however, was different, and he and his followers founded a new movement. The fundamental tenet of "progressive education" was that every human being has a significant contribution to make and that schools should be designed to help him make it. Mary Parker Follett's answer, too, was different. She recognized that a thoroughly participant democracy was possible only when every citizen had the means of expressing his wishes, and used them. She demanded a new study of social relations on the basis of group action. She presented the conceptual framework which has become a fundamental part of discussion theory. Knowing her and reading her books, the Inquiry staff accepted her challenge and set out to discover and test the techniques of group discussion.

Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel

There was in the life and work of Mary Parker Follett and John Dewey a considerable emphasis on action. She was from time to time associated with various social projects in her city, but he was likely to remain aloof, devoted to teaching and writing. Both of them were essentially

humanists; their suggestions could be dismissed as the testimony of another expert. Had these two been the only influences on them, the discussion pioneers might have been content to think, to discuss, and to write about social problems. But the Social Gospel gave their Inquiry a vital impetus. It gave social action the divine sanction, and it gave all enlightened Christians a clear mandate. They were to go out and do good. Not only were the sponsors of the Inquiry largely churchmen, but the staff itself included two veterans of the Christian Associations, Rhoda McCulloch and H. D. Porter. Many of the conferences they planned and studied were sponsored, officially or unofficially, by religious organizations. Charles Howard Hopkins has traced this Social Gospel movement back to the early part of the nineteenth century, though he admits that it really did not get underway until after the Civil War, as indicated in the title of his book, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915.[47] One of a group of early Congregational leaders, Washington Gladden, wrote a book in 1886 titled Applied Christianity, Moral Aspects of Social

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[47]New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.

Questions.[48] His title serves as a symbol of the efforts of these churchmen to formulate a law of love equal to the demands of modern industrial society; he himself was active in the movement into the pre-World War I period of the twentieth century.

The leading figure of the Social Gospel movement was Walter Rauschenbusch. His first major book, according to H. Richard Niebuhr, marked "a new course in American Christianity."[49] Though it was written in some haste, it was the result of years of thought and study. In 1884 Rauschenbusch had gone to his first pastorate in New York to save souls, in the old sense of "the individual in the sight of God," but there on the edge of the slums his social education began.[50] By 1893 he had helped to gather a small group of religious leaders into a socially conscious organization they called "the Brotherhood of the Kingdom." They felt that Christians had abandoned or perverted the great social cause of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God on earth,

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[48] Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1886.

[49] Personalities in Social Reform (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 71.

[50] Vernon Parker Boedein, The Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 4.

by ignoring the impact of society on an individual's life. Personal salvation alone was not enough. The Brotherhood wanted to inject the principles of Jesus into the political and social movements of America. They encouraged each other to guard carefully the freedom of discussion which gave every truth-loving man the right to speak his thoughts.[51] Rauschenbusch had been confused as to the Christian's social responsibility during the early years of ministry, and he had gone back to search the Bible for guiding principles. As a key member of the Brotherhood he challenged Christians to find the principles of Jesus and apply them to economic and political problems. But the influence of Rauschenbusch and the Brotherhood was limited to their own Baptist denomination until 1907. His Christianity and the Social Crisis brought the social gospel to the attention of all Protestants and made it a prevailing religious doctrine in America.

For Rauschenbusch the Kingdom of God is not something one achieves in the dimensions of the future, perhaps being allowed there only after death. The Kingdom of God is of this earth, and a man carries part of the responsibility for it, along with Him. Rauschenbusch was heavily influenced

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[51] Ibid., p. 1.

by the egalitarian democracy which Woodrow Wilson proclaimed in the 1912 campaign. He even believed that the socialist ideology of his time was complementary to social Christianity, pointing out that the early Christians had shared their material possessions and had considered property a condition of sin.[52] He suggested that Christians should join the upward movement of the working classes, for the increasing complexity of modern life necessitates more state supervision and control.[53] He saw Christianity as a great spiritual force to be pitted against the materialism gaining so much predominance. All men should participate, he said.

> If now we could have faith enough to believe that all human life can be filled with divine purpose; that God saves not only the soul, but the whole of human life; that anything which serves to make men healthy, intelligent, happy, and good is a service to the father of men; that the kingdom of God is not bounded by the Church, but includes all human relations--then all professions would be hallowed and receive religious dignity. A man making a shoe or arguing a law case or planting potatoes or teaching school, could feel that his was itself a contribution to the welfare of mankind, and indeed his main contribution to it.[54]

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[52]Christianity and the Social Crisis (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1907), p. 390.

[53]Ibid., p. 400.

[54]Ibid., p. 355.

Characteristically, Rauschenbusch closed his book with a chapter titled "What to Do." He challenged every Christian to confront the sins of the social order and to change himself and his society. The minister, in particular, should "lift the social questions to a religious level by faith and spiritual insight."[55]

Rauschenbusch wrote two more books, Christianizing the Social Order,[56] and A Theology for the Social Gospel,[57] in which he carried further the implications of his first work. In a foreword to his second book he admitted that his first had created much more of an impact than he had expected.[58] Indeed, from 1908 until his death in 1918 he was the acknowledged leader of the movement, delivering many lectures, sermons, and speeches each year, a number of them before various student groups. In 1910 he wrote The Social Principles of Jesus,[59] like Elliott and Cutler's Student Standards of Action[60] a part of the College

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[55]Ibid., p. 415.

[56]New York: Macmillan Company, 1912.

[57]New York: Macmillan Company, 1917.

[58]Christianizing the Social Order, p. vii.

[59]New York: Association Press, 1916.

[60]Harrison S. Elliott and Ethel Cutler, Student Standards of Action (New York: Association Press, 1914).

voluntary study courses." It is similar to that and other books in the series: pertinent quotations from the Bible, brief paragraphs of explanation, and a list of questions for discussion. In it he presented a simple analysis of the Social Gospel which deserves careful scrutiny, for it was the most widely read of all his books, especially in student groups. It also should be noted that these little discussion guides are the direct antecedents of the Inquiry's discussion guides in the decade that followed. According to Hopkins, this one is the best known of the study manuals which came out before World War I; it was used extensively in the International Y.M.C.A.[61] The book was written primarily for extra-curricular voluntary study groups of seniors, and it was supposed to make no attempt "to impose conclusions."[62] Yet every chapter was prefaced with a terse statement of its proposition, such as those of the first three chapters, three "axiomatic social convictions of Jesus": 1) "Human life and personality are sacred." 2) "Men belong together." 3) "The strong must stand up for the weak." In the chapters which followed these principles are applied to various concepts and prob-

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[61]Hopkins, Rise of the Social Gospel, p. 213.

[62]Social Principles, p. v.

lems. The Social Gospel insisted that each person carries the supreme responsibility for creating the right social order and thus contributing to the creation of the Kingdom of God. This demands the leadership of those who get their satisfaction by serving humanity. In the conflict with evil, "the social principles of Jesus demand personal allegiance and social action."[63]

Although the various denominations had recognized the Social Gospel by employing social work specialists and forming active programs, its existence did not become "official" until 1903 with the organization of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. The many denominations had to join themselves together in order to present a united front on national issues. The statement which came from the first meeting of the Council gave Jesus Christ final authority over social as well as individual life. It challenged the Church to assume an active role as a major social institution. Soon the Council's official "Commission on the Church and Social Service" was investigating strikes.[64] During its first decade, the Council's program

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[63] Ibid., p. 184.

[64] Hopkins, Rise of the Social Gospel, pp. 302 ff.

grew to include the various problem areas confronting all Christian citizens. When the founders of the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life went to the Council in 1922, the aims of the Conference were found to be in keeping with the developing traditions of organized church social work. It was only natural that the founders envisioned a Conference organized on the pattern of the Council itself, with its study commissions and its interdenominational tone. Sherwood Eddy, perhaps the chief founder of the Inquiry, has written in his autobiography that Rauschenbusch was one of the influences which forced him to realize that religion must be a shared, not a solitary, experience. His travels, work, and writing around the world led him to social evangelism.[65] It was only natural that the Inquiry's study of discussion method gradually had an impact on the functioning of the Federal Council. Benson Y. Landis reported in the February, 1922 Occasional Papers of the Inquiry that about one-third of the 1920 quadriennial meeting had been devoted to forums and discussions, though these procedures were "quite alien to the Federal Council." Data books had been sent to those preparing to attend the conference, and, surprisingly enough, they had been read. Landis predicted

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[65] Sherwood Eddy, Eighty Adventurous Years (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), p. 120.

that the success of the meeting would have a considerable influence on the use of discussion by religious bodies.

The Transition from Public Consideration to Cooperative Group Inquiry

No one book, or person, or occurrence can be positively identified as the beginning of the discussion movement. Some of its origins lie deep in the past, and it shares with other movements many of the thought currents of what have been referred to as "the age of science" or "the age of progress." It has been possible, however, to identify a number of men and women who gave their understanding and enthusiasm to it, and their contribution can be given a rough measure. No study of the origins of the movement would be complete without some consideration of Walter Bagehot, Graham Wallas, and Woodrow Wilson, those early writers who first suspected and proclaimed that the "age of discussion" had arrived. Mary Parker Follett tried to apply the new concepts of the social sciences to the phenomena of group discussion. John Dewey worked in the obscure reaches of philosophy, building with great effort a new Weltanschauung, though he left to his disciples, William Heard Kilpatrick chief among them, the task of translating his theories into practice. Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel provided the imperative

which prompted the churches and the Christian Associations to strike out alone and create a new conference methodology. Even before World War I these pioneer discussion organizations were publishing study materials and discussion guides. During the war the extensive overseas program of the Young Men's Christian Association, under the direction of H. B. Carter, included the now-inevitable discussion groups. In this stream of the movement Harrison S. Elliott was the first to turn his attention to the method itself.[66] Edward Alfred Wright Sheffield made discussion method a subject for critical analysis.

Sheffield's book Joining in Public Discussion[67] emerges as an effective symbol of the transition from the old concept, discussion as public consideration--as the term was used by Wichelhaus and Wilson--to the new concept of discussion as cooperative group inquiry--as the term was used by Elliott and the Inquiry. Sheffield seems here, first, to have written an orthodox public speaking text and then, later, to have added some introductory material on discussion, derived primarily from Follett. Pointing out

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[66]Elliott's Leadership of Red Triangle Groups (New York: Association Press, 1918) presented detailed instructions for an Army "Bible study or life problem group program."

[67]New York: George H. Doran Co., 1922.

that the unused talents of the workers is the greatest waste-product of modern industry, he made his real intent clear at the beginning when he said that he wanted to help the laboring man to gain "the art of transmuting his experience into influence."[6] This book is what one might expect of a 1.1. popular text in "public speaking," written by one who acknowledged his debt to C. T. Woolbert and J. M. Winans.[7] The first of two sections, titled "Qualifying Oneself to Contribute," consists of eight chapters. One considers the control of voice and body, and it includes practice material. Several chapters consider the problem of materials arrangement in a speech. Chapter four is titled "Sticking to the Point." There is a simple treatment of logic in speech, based on Dewey's How We Think and Aldrich's The Application of Logic. The final two chapters in the first section describe the problem of clothing ideas in language. One might expect that the discussion orientation would enter the second section, for it was titled: "Making the Discussion Group Cooperate." But the two chapters are devoted primarily to the making of proper agendas, the use of visual aids in committee

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[6] Ibid., p. v.

[7] Ibid., p. 47 and p. 48.

work, and the rules of parliamentary procedure. Even when he wrote of "keeping the meeting above crowdmindedness," Sheffield turned to Everett D. Martin rather than to Follett for an understanding of the nature of a crowd.[70] All these chapters contain good advice for the speaker operating in the larger realm of "public discussion."

The introduction of Joining in Public Discussion, however, reveals the obvious and acknowledged influence of Mary Parker Follett and her New State. The title page announced that the book is a study written "for members of labor unions, conferences, forums, and other discussion groups." Sheffield insisted on the second page that the discussion group rather than the audience is "the power plant for influence." He agreed with Miss Follett that a group is equal to more than a sum of its parts; that is, the group interaction stimulates each participant to do his very best, and the group product is, therefore, qualitatively superior to the product of any one individual. He agreed with Graham Wallas that group thinking draws out the best in every participant. He said:

> The whole process, too, will get in the group a constant testing of its ideas by the atmosphere of the dis-

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[70] Ibid., p. 157.

cussion--by the instinctive value-comments, too delicate for words, that play about the subject in eager tones, embarrassed silences, quizzical smiles, and the turn of eyes.[71]

He admitted that he was committed to the new view that the consensus created by a group should harmonize the different ideas advocated by various participants. Here he explained Miss Follett's idea that consensus is quite different from compromise. Yet when he summarized his introduction he wrote a dia that "the right ambition of one's speaking is that it shall be influential," and he urged his worker-students to study the motive forces in the minds of the audience.[72] Miss Follett would have preferred to speak more in terms of "release" and "creativity."

The material contained in Sheffield's book is a good explanation of the problems faced by a public speaker, and the laboring men who used it probably found it helpful. He seemed particularly able to present in simple terms the essentials of arranging speech materials and of parliamentary procedure. It does seem extraordinary that the chapters failed so completely to satisfy the Follettian promise of the introduction. It simply did not present any

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[71] Ibid., p. ix.

[72] Ibid., p. xiv.

instruction on group leadership, patterns of participation, or the group process, matters which are now covered in discussion texts as a matter of course. It should be remembered that the book was written before the Inquiry's decade, and, other than the one book by Miss Follett and Elliott's guide for soldier groups, no one had yet said much about group discussion. Under the influence of Mr. Herfield, Miss Follett, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, Herfield was just beginning to turn to the problems of social methodology which were to occupy him in the Inquiry. If the full-time staff he alone wrote on discussion itself. His little books A Cooperative Technique for Conflict and Creative Discussion were valuable contributions to the developing methodology. What Training in Public Discussion was written before this period of his life, and therein he set forth ideas, though he did not enter it.

CHAPTER III

THE STORY OF THE INQUIRY

The nature of "the Inquiry" as an organization is not easy to determine. Although it began only forty-five years ago, many of the important records have been lost, and the memories of those who still survive are admittedly poor sources of information. Fortunately for the historian, many of the people who participated in Inquiry activities, either as staff or as associates, were able and effective writers. All through its short life-span, various Inquirers attempted to catch in words just what they thought the Inquiry was or should have been. Herbert Croly, founder and long-time editor of The New Republic, was a key figure in the group from the beginning. In the March 14, 1928 issue of his magazine he wrote an editorial about the Inquiry, accompanying an article by Alfred Dwight Sheffield. He said:

> The word "Inquiry" is an abbreviated name for a small group who started soon after the War as "Inquiry into the Christian Way of Life." The ignoble role of the Christian Churches during the War troubled the several members of this group. They shuddered for the future

> of a civilization which was apparently so completely captivated by unruly self-deceptive economic and political activities. . . . The Inquiry ruled out the programmatic formulations of the Christian life, and searched in other directions for light upon their problem. It was a grim and puzzling quandary in which thereafter they found themselves. . . . The Inquiry behaved as if it could wring from an objectively questioned and observed experience of life an impulse towards fulfillment which it could not derive from an experience deliberately subordinated to preconceived patterns. Its members were warriors who started out to reform an unregenerate world with their swords twisted into the unheroic and quizzical form of question marks.[1]

Members of the Inquiry staff published a number of reviews and articles which present some insight into the nature of the organization. In the New Republic article mentioned above, Sheffield wrote:

> As an agency of education the "Inquiry" is somewhat elusive when one tries to place it in any family tree of enterprises. It was set afoot in 1922 as a sort of free-lance service maintained by the cooperation of progressive leaders in a number of organizations--especially those with programs for influencing opinion in the field of industrial, racial, and international relations. And it has developed, without consolidating any membership of its own, into a clearing house and meeting ground for people in many groups, both religious and secular, who are studying how to make their relationships and activities yield vitally educative experience.
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> . . . the "Inquiry" took its rise in a widespread feeling among church liberals that the War had left Christendom a waste land of discredited social sanctions. . . . In America, at least, the existing agencies for enlightened dealing between man and man seemed bankrupt, as the land was swept by crude gusts of labor-baiting,

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[1]p. 110.

race intolerance, and national self-will.

In these two statements both Croly and Sheffield described the Inquiry in its matured form, an organization of skilled conference consultants and discussion experts dedicated to reforming the methodology used in American conferences. In 1926, two years earlier and hence two years closer to the founding, Bruno Lasker described the original aim:

> What the organizers originally had in mind was something along the lines of the British Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship (often referred to as COPEC), since held at Birmingham in April, 1924. Commissions were to be appointed to study specific problems in social relationships and the demands these problems made upon Christian living. After a time, responsible spokesmen for these commissions were to report and, at a joint national conference, agree upon a national program for projecting the common findings through the activities of established religious agencies. . . . From the very start, those most active in the American enterprise had little faith in the pronouncements of small, specialized groups and desired to develop and deepen the mode of inquiry where the mood of inquiry was already most pronounced--that is, not among those professionally connected with organized religion, but among the rank and file of citizens who are concerned about religion in everyday life.[2]

The Inquiry had begun as an organized investigation to determine anew the nature of the Christian way of life and a resolute desire to rejuvenate and reform the functioning of the various religious agencies. Though it gradually

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[2]"The Inquiry," American Review, IV (July-August, 1926), p. 1-10.

shifted the emphasis and lost the support of a number of the churchmen among its founders, it did have a profound effect on the conference methods of the religious bodies of America.

The Beginning--1922-1923: Preliminary Organization and Survey

The "National Conference on the Christian Way of Life," as the Inquiry was known in the beginning, was certainly a religious organization in intent, purpose, and point of view. It began in the determined efforts of a small group of church leaders who were active in the Federal Council of Churches. The Council's Annual Report for 1922 lists among "the more important conferences and special gatherings": "January 31--Conference on initiating "National Conference on Christian Way of Life."[3] This conference is probably the meeting Harry F. Ward referred to when he wrote S. C. Carter on October 7, 1924 concerning the origins of the organization:

> In the first place the enterprise did not begin in a meeting at Lake Mohonk. . . . It began with Sherwood Eddy bringing from England the plan of COPEC and promoting a little meeting in New York to discuss the

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[3]p. 22.

possibility of a similar enterprise.[4]

In a memorandum on "The Evolution of Inquiry Philosophy" prepared late in 1928 E. C. Lindeman also referred to the key role of Sherwood Eddy:

> The original motivations for The Conference on the Christian Way of Life were unmistakably religious. Sherwood Eddy, who first interpreted the idea to me, wanted to arouse the churches and religious people of America to a recognition of their responsibility toward certain social problems. In this sense, the idea was based upon the Rauschenbusch philosophy of Christian sociology, or social Christianity. But, Eddy and his group believed that the proper method of proceeding was through organized Christian bodies rather than through the Christianization of political and secular movements. The initiators had assimilated a sufficient amount of the newer education to make a purely evangelical campaign impossible; they therefore conceived the plan of two years of investigation and study to be followed by a great national conference which was to arouse the conscience of the Church. . . . This was to be a movement of Christian liberals organized for the purpose of bringing Christian solutions to bear upon international, industrial, and racial problems.[5]

But those who championed this conference wanted something different from the usual pattern of papers, speeches, and prayers. When they received, on March 10, 1922, the

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[4]This letter was among those found in the Inquiry's archives. In this chapter references to letters, memoranda, and reports, whether made in the text or in footnotes, indicate other archives materials, in the personal possession of the author.

[5]This memorandum was included in E. C. Carter's letter to Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst, December 11, 1928.

official sanction of the Federal Council of Churches, the Administrative Committee's statement reflected the founders' loss of faith in the traditional type of conference.

> The purpose of the conference is to provide for thorough examination and study of the meaning of Christianity for human relationships, with especial attention to industry, citizenship, and race relations in the United States, and the function of the Church in social and civic affairs.
>
> The spirit of the conference shall be one of open-minded search for the truth, of freedom from propaganda for any special opinions and of devotion to the one task of securing a fuller understanding of the mind of Christ and the significance of his teaching for the social life of America.
>
> The work of the conference shall be limited to research, study and discussion, with no administrative responsibilities other than those connected with the conference itself, and shall supplement, and not duplicate, the important work now being carried on by the Churches and Christian organizations.
>
> The responsibility for the conference, including organization and agenda, shall be entrusted to a national committee of not fewer than one hundred Christian men and women--especially those who have had experience in the fields to be studied, as employers or employees, economists, sociologists, ministers, and other leaders in public life--selected in such a way as to secure representation of various points of view and experience.
>
> RESOLVED: That the Administrative Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America approves the holding of such a conference and hereby appoints a small group of persons who are requested to create, after careful consideration, the national committee, of which they shall themselves be members, and to convene it as soon as possible, with the understanding that the national committee shall be wholly free in planning for the conference and that the Federal Council assumes no responsibility for its findings or its financial support.[6]

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[6]Annual Report, 1922, pp. 155-156.

Dr. William Adams Brown of the Union Theological Seminary was appointed "convener." The committee of fifteen were:

Dr. G. Sherwood Eddy	Kirby Page
Rev. Rolvix Harlan	Miss Florence Simons
Harold A. Hatch	Rev. William Austin Smith
Rev. Arthur E. Holt	Mrs. Robert E. Speer
Rev. John McDowell	Rev. Alva Taylor
Rev. William P. Merrill	Rev. Worth M. Tippy
Prof. J. W. Nixon	Rev. Harry F. Ward

This group called a meeting at Lake Mohonk, New York, on May 8 and 9, 1922 for the purpose of organizing and activating the National Conference. The Mohonk meeting developed an organization similar in structure to the Federal Council with its commissions on International Justice and Good Will, Better Race Relations, Christian Education, Social Service, and Evangelism. The original two-year study period preceding the National Conference itself was to be directed by five commissions: Education, Church, Race Relations, International Relations, and Industry. A central office was to be established in New York City with a paid staff to coordinate the work of the various commissions and groups. Harrison S. Elliott was chief among those who urged the founders to use group discussion as their basic methodology of research and action. It was agreed that this would be in keeping with the mandate from the Federal Council, which had spoken of "open-minded

search for the truth," and "freedom from propaganda." Dr. Brown continued as the key administrative official of the group. It was probably he who carried the chief burden in establishing the office and forming the commissions.

In the remainder of 1922 and 1923 the essential features of the organization were established. The final report during this initial period of development indicated that 198 persons had joined the National Committee, from which had been formed an Executive Committee of 46 members and an Administration Committee of eight members. In addition to the original committee of fifteen, the Executive Committee included such persons as: S. M. Cavert, Mabel Cratty, James H. Dillard, H. S. Elliott, Charles H. Fahs, Frederick M. Harris, E. C. Lindeman, J. F. McConnell, Ruth Morgan, John R. Mott, Whitney H. Shepardson, Mrs. Willard Straight. The eight members of the Administration Committee were: Miss Cratty, Miss Morgan, Mrs. Straight, Dr. Brown, Dr. Cavert, Mr. Harris, Mr. Shepardson, and C. H. Tobias. Membership in the National Committee involved, according to the statement of December 20, 1923, approval of the aims of the enterprise, suggestion and criticism of various projects and reports, and a willingness to spread the ideas of the Conference and to pass on to the Secretariat suggestions for improvement. Actual management

of the enterprise was left to the Executive Committee, which was to supervise the work of the four commissions and the staff. Although the smaller Administration Committee could act in its absence, the Executive Committee was to remain the policy-making body. For example, it decided on December 9, 1922 to suspend the Commission on Education, stating that each of the other Commissions and indeed the entire Conference was concerned with Education.[7] The December 20 report outlined in some detail the nature and functions of the remaining four Commissions. Each was to have a nucleus group in New York, but the report emphasized that only a large number of groups scattered across the country could make the Inquiry truly "national" in scope. It re-emphasized the belief of the movement's leaders that the Inquiry should never become a propaganda organization. It was to seek the truth, not to promulgate it.

The March 8, 1923 "progress report" announced that an office had been rented at 129 East 52nd Street, New York City. A bank account had been established at the Fifth Avenue National Bank on August 9. Rhoda McCulloch had arranged to serve half-time as an Executive Secretary on

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[7]Reported in the Progress Report of March 8, 1923.

October 15. Although she admits that she spent most of her time working in the Inquiry, she did maintain her official position as Editorial Secretary of the National Board of the Y.W.C.A.[8] E. C. Carter, the other member of the Executive Secretaries team, returned to the United States from England to assume his duties on January 17, 1923. Prior to World War I Carter had been the National Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in India; during the War he had been the chief executive officer in the extensive Y.M.C.A. program for American troops in Europe. Alfred Dwight Sheffield became Secretary of the Industrial Commission on September 1, 1923. He had been granted two years leave of absence by the President of Wellesley College. He brought to the Inquiry extensive consultant experience with various management and labor groups in New England. Bruno Lasker became Secretary of the Race Commission on October 1, 1923, coming from several years as Associate Editor of The Survey. He had had considerable experience in England and the United States as journalist and social worker. These four, with S. M. Keeny, who joined the staff later, were the key people around whom the organization developed. Of course there was a clerical and office staff of some size from 1923 onward. The

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[8]Rhoda McCulloch interview with the author, May 25, 1957.

Secretariat was functioning smoothly by the end of that year.

The Industrial Commission

The Industrial Commission was the first to get underway, even though it was not the first to produce results. According to its minutes, the Commission's first meeting was held on September 6, 1922, probably the only Commission to meet during that year. There were eight members present. Kirby Page served as secretary. The group decided to ask Bishop Francis J. McConnell to serve as chairman. The next meeting was to consider the scope of the Commission's work. By March 8, 1923 there had been four meetings, but evidently little progress had been made. In April Bishop McConnell was reported to be an absentee chairman, and Page resigned as Secretary. Mr. Page had prepared a 400 page manuscript which was to be published for the use of the various Inquiry groups, but the publication plans had not materialized. He was of course disappointed.

In view of the obvious difficulties the Executive Secretaries asked F. M. Harris and E. C. Lindeman to assist them in reconstituting the Commission. They arranged for Sheffield to come down from Wellesley to become Secretary; he was eminently fitted for the task because of his pioneer

work in the use of discussion and his many contacts with management and labor groups in New England. The Reconstitution Committee held several meetings during the summer to define the task of the Commission, some of them in Mr. Harris's office. By the end of the year this group had supervised the completion of Sheffield's first pamphlet on group discussion and two study outlines.[9]

The International Commission

The December 20, 1923 report indicated that the International Relations Commission had been the first to produce tangible results. At the insistence of the Student Christian Associations and the Student Volunteer Movement it had designed and produced a syllabus titled International Problems and the Christian Way of Life for use in undergraduate student discussion groups. A number of meetings had been held during the year devoted to the preparation of this study outline. The agendas for these meetings indicate that each question in the booklet was given careful consideration and evaluation. Correspondence between Miss McCulloch and Whitney H. Shepardson, chairman, indicates that they

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[9]A Cooperative Technique for Conflict, The Question of "Recognizing the Union," and The Question of the "Right to Strike," all published by the Inquiry in 1924.

themselves considered every sentence. Indeed, soon after publication, the Commission set out to revise the booklet on the basis of the criticisms and evaluations received. Even though the Commission did not yet have a secretary, it could count on the support of a number of people. Among those at its second meeting early in the year were Herbert Croly, John Foster Dulles, Harrison S. Elliott, Charles H. Fahs, Ruth Morgan, James T. Shotwell, and the Executive Secretaries. Some of these people met as often as once a week, "in order to get on with the work of the Commission."[10]

The Church Commission

According to the December 20, 1923 report the Church Commission had finally accepted as its full title "The Church and the Christian Way of Life" after using first "The Commission on the Social Function of the Church" and then "The Function of the Church in Society." At a preliminary meeting early in 1923 Dr. William Adams Brown presided and the Rev. Samuel McCrea Cavert served as secretary. By the end of the year Dr. Cavert was able to report that a sub-group had undertaken to produce a study outline titled "Why the Church Anyhow?" in response to appeals from the Christian Associations. Two other sub-groups were preparing outlines

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[10]Progress Report, March 8, 1923.

on the Church's function in society and the problems of professional religious workers. The Commission had decided to employ a full-time Secretary, and the Rev. Angus Dun had been asked to take the job.

The Race Commission

Although Dr. James H. Dillard, President of the Slater and Jeannes Funds, Charlottesville, Virginia, had agreed to become chairman early in 1923, the Race Commission did not really get under way until late in the year. Miss McCulloch reported on April 20 that the personnel and secretariat of the Commission had been difficult to decide.[11] The work of the Commission came to a focus when Bruno Lasker became Secretary in October, 1923. He immediately began an extensive series of interviews with leading teachers, scholars, and social workers in an attempt to determine what research had been done in the field, what needed to be done, and what the Race Commission of the Inquiry should do. An agreement had been reached earlier in the year that the Commission would consider race relations in general, not just the problem of the Negro. In his careful statements of what the Commission should do, Lasker suggested that it should focus its attention on one racial

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[11]Minutes of Staff Meeting, April 20, 1923.

group at a time, in the overall national configuration. A part of his work was a careful survey of the literature in the field, which he found quite meager. In the report of December 20, 1923, the Commission reported that its first project would be "the preparation of a series of case studies in race conflicts, maladjustments, and attempted adjustments having in mind Jewish, Negro, Oriental, Mexican, White, and foreign-born problems."

By the end of the preliminary period of organization and survey, the basic outline of the Inquiry had been laid. The key staff people had been employed. An office had been rented and staffed. All the four commissions were functioning more or less effectively. The publishing program was underway. Adequate financial support had been secured. The staff and commission members regarded themselves as embarked together on a cooperative investigation to determine the Christian's place and function in industrial, international, and race relation problems. The recognition that the organization was a going concern is particularly evident in the change in attitude toward publicity. From the beginning the various progress reports and "tentative statements" had warned that the organization was not yet ready for widespread notice by the public. The Secretariat insisted that the organization should spread by natural means, as in-

dividuals in various parts of the country were affected by the new mood and method. But the letter which went out to the members of the National Committee on December 19, 1923 contained a change in attitude toward publicity.

> The Conference has not sought publicity. In fact it would almost be accurate to say that it has avoided publicity thus far. It has been felt by many that the very genius of the enterprise precluded the kind of "organization self-advertisement" in which practically all of us have indulged so fully in the past. The soundest kind of information will grow out of actual achievement rather than from wide-spread advertisement of possible lines of activity which are still in the realm of promise. The policy of allowing the venture to commend itself by the inherent worth of the underlying ideas, rather than by the personality or prominence of its National Committee, Commission members, and staff, has received solid approval. With the appearance of objective results of the Conference in such form as the syllabus on "International Problems and the Christian Way of Life" we enter a new phase with reference to publicity, for now, at last, it is possible for people by testifying to the value of our product to bear witness simultaneously to the value of the enterprise. Reviews of our publications will automatically increase the number of those who are coming to understand the purpose and aims of the Conference. In fact there are not a few who feel that knowledge and understanding of the Conference will come most soundly through the active use of the products of the various Commissions and of the methods of the whole venture.

The National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, set up on the familiar pattern of other Federal Council sponsored projects, was also to be a national gathering of church leaders and lay people; their purpose was to work out in some detail the Christian way of life and to apply it through their church organizations. But in the beginning

and continuing through the first two years, they had committed themselves to using the method of group inquiry or discussion. This committment held them through ten years as they gradually realized that they did not need to have their national meeting after all.

The Middle Period--1924-1929: A Change of Emphasis and a Shift in Organization

The Inquiry began its period of maturity as an effective organization of socially conscious men. In 1924 they were still seeking the organization and methodology for a National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, but the national meeting dropped further and further into the background. The demand for study outlines and the committment to the discussion method kept the staff busy and involved them in the conferences of a host of national, regional, and local organizations. In 1927 they sponsored the first university discussion course in America. These multifarious activities took them away from the intentions of the founders. E. C. Lindeman discussed this shift in emphasis and organization in a long memorandum entitled "The Evolution of Inquiry Philosophy" late in 1928 (pointing out, in typical Inquiry fashion, that he presented his analysis

to stimulate discussion.).[12] He analyzed the shift in the following terms:

> From religious to secular
> From conscience to consciousness
> From groups to individuals to new groups
> From problems to methods
> From propaganda to education
> From fact-finding to process-analysis
> From inquiry to inquiries
> From Christian consent to psychological integration

He pointed out that the organization was far different from what the founders had intended and that the defection of some of them had accelerated the change. By 1928 the Inquiry had become, as Lindeman described it:

> . . . a staff of specialists engaged in psycho-sociological studies; these studies are directed to those areas of human relationships in which conflict is present or imminent; the primary object of these studies is to discover the means for integrating or resolving those differences which underlie actual or potential conflict; the secondary object of these studies is to furnish educational material in the form of study-outlines for individuals and groups desiring to experiment with their social relationships.

The Administration Committee at its meeting of December 11, 1925 discussed these changes in detail, noting in particular that the organization was now project centered rather than subject or commission centered.[13] It made a number of

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[12]This memorandum was among the "exhibits"in E. C. Carter's annual letter to Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst, December 11, 1928.

[13]Minutes of the Administration Committee of the Inquiry, December 11, 1925.

policy decisions designed to recognize the new features of the organization and program.

The change in the nature of the organization can be seen in the gradual shift from "The National Conference on the Christian Way of Life" to "The Inquiry." The word "inquiry" had played a prominent role in all the tentative statements sent out from the central office. The statement of May 1, 1923 had been titled: "A National Inquiry into the Christian Way of Life." Later statements insisted that "This Inquiry is a cooperative venture." The December 20, 1923 statement noted that the National Conference was now referred to as "The Inquiry" for the sake of brevity. After that the organization regularly referred to itself as the Inquiry in press releases and publications. The minutes of the second Lake Mohonk meeting of the National Committee in May, 1924 reveal that the new name was used by those who still remained active in the movement. When the monthly paper was begun, a number of names were considered; "The Inquiry" was chosen. But the staff ordinarily called it the Occasional Papers to distinguish it from the organization. The first official action on the name seems to be a part of the Executive Committee's consideration of the shift from the commission-centered to a project-centered program, November 6, 1925. At that meeting the decision as to

whether to drop the old name was referred to a committee consisting of Galen Fisher, S. M. Cavert, and E. C. Carter.[14] The National Conference on the Christian Way of Life had become "the Inquiry."

The fate of the national meeting

There was considerable emphasis on preparation for the national meeting during 1924 and 1925. Dr. John M. Moore presented early in 1924 an "informal memorandum" in which he suggested that a period of five years should be set as a maximum period between the preliminary stages of the inquiry and the final stage of the national meeting itself. He re-emphasized a theme that was to figure large in the continuing program--it should work toward wide participation, calling for the stimulation and study of group discussions throughout the nation, bringing to bear on the major problems of the day the widest possible variety of opinion. He foresaw the necessary publicity job that was going to have to be done, and he suggested that the Inquiry use the Christian way, the way of personal contact and encouragement. His position is reflected in a paragraph of the February 5, 1924 statement:

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[14] Recorded as a part of the Administration Committee minutes referred to immediately above.

> As a climax to this program of study and inquiry a nation-wide conference on the Christian Way of Life will be held when groups throughout the country have become so aroused to the enterprise as to insure that it will be a real conferring together and truly national in representation. This National Conference, perhaps two or three weeks in duration, will clarify and deepen the purpose of those who have shared in the Inquiry and give direction to the thought and study which ought certainly to be a continuing result after this enterprise as such has gone out of existence. The purpose of such a Conference will be to insure that whatever of value has emerged from the process may become fully related to the normal activity of civic, social and religious organizations of the country. Because this conference should be planned and directed by men and women throughout the nation who have been really a part of the Inquiry itself, it is proposed that in the spring or summer of 1925 an interim conference be held, drawing together those who have thus far been active participants in the enterprise, including the National Committee and the Commissions, to hear reports of progress and to make plans for the immediate future. It is only at such a meeting that final plans for a truly National Conference can be projected, its date and place determined as well as the size and method of representation.[15]

The hope for a national meeting still lingered at the second Lake Mohonk Conference in May. A committee appointed to study the function of the gathering suggested the following four:

1. To furnish a larger and more complete validation of the experience of the members who have participated in the Inquiry.
2. To stage for purposes of national attention the Inquiry itself, its methods and results.
3. To focus and crystalize the new life-purposes that

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[15]This was the last of a series of statements circulated during the early period, each being designed to clarify the nature of the organization.

have been in process of formation on the part of those who have cooperated with the Inquiry.

4. To constitute the termination of the movement as a formal organization.[16]

But no official action was taken toward the actual setting up of the national meeting itself.

The February 5, 1924 statement contains a clue to the gradual drift away from the idea of a national meeting. The last of the commissions' list of six tasks was dropped; they were no longer "to public the final results after the preliminary findings from wide-spread discussion have been laid before the National Assembly." A number of people in the organization were never enthusiastic about the possibilities of a large-scale conference. F. M. Harris wrote to Carter on January 16 that he considered the national conference "a possible method among many for reaching a larger aim."[17] Miss McCulloch presented a memorandum which was adopted in its essentials by the Administration Committee on May 15. In it she said: "The forwarding program ought to be in the main making known the progress of the Inquiry and furthering its projects, rather than giving promissory

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[16]Abstract of Minutes of Meeting of the National Committee of the Inquiry, Lake Mohonk, May 22nd to May 24th, 1924.

[17]F. M. Harris letter to E. C. Carter, January 16, 1924.

notes of large results which are hopefully looked for." Then she outlined seven things which the organization should do in order to carry out its mission. She was especially determined that the Inquiry work through other organizations as much as possible, that it collect and publish the results of group discussions all across the nation, that it participate in "regional and subject conferences," and that it provide various journals and newspapers with a complete coverage of Inquiry activities.[18] This became the modus operandi of the organization, usually referred to as "forwarding the Inquiry."

As the Inquiry became more and more an organization of conference consultants and discussion experts, the national meeting assumed less and less importance. For a time there was some talk of an "interim conference" such as Miss McCulloch had proposed. Indeed, during the latter part of 1924 there were definite suggestions that such a conference should be held in 1925. But by the February 11th meeting of the Executive Committee even that had become obviously unnecessary. The Rev. R. E. Diffendorfer had definite plans underway for a training conference on discussion method, which was to depend heavily on Inquiry assistance. A number

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[18]Undated memorandum in the Inquiry archives.

of national organizations were beginning to use Inquiry techniques in their annual meetings.[19] All this activity, coupled with the long-standing refusal of the Inquiry staff to consider their organization a permanent one, gradually made the projected meeting presumptuous. The Executive Committee on February 11 refused to set the termination date for the Inquiry as an organization, though there was still some agreement that a national conference should be held. It was emphasized, however, that the Inquiry would raise no objection to any other agency holding a national discussion-type conference. Though the projected National Conference on the Christian Way of Life was obviously a dead issue, it was not until about two years later that Carter could write in unequivocal terms to Mrs. Elmhirst:

> In the terms conceived when The National Conference on the Christian Way of Life was first organized, a "National Conference" will never be held. It would have been a gathering which was neither "national," nor a "conference." It was all very well to set out to try to find the Christian way of life for industry, race and international relations, but it soom became clear that if Christianity was ever to offer a method of finding a satisfactory way of life in these areas, a prior study was necessary as to what methods might be adopted for propa-

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[19] Among those listed in the Executive Committee's February 11, 1925 minutes: the National Fellowship Conference at Columbus, Ohio; the National Church Peace Conference; the Conference on Economic, Political, Racial, and International Problems at Olivet College.

> gating Christianity as a way of life which would not in themselves invalidate the whole process. The pursuance of this study seemed to show that the kind of national conference originally proposed would miseducate people as to the means whereby a useful search for the Christian way of life would be made. But if the original "national Conference" has gone by default, the Inquiry's concern for a valid method of conferring on a national scale has been intensified. In its participation in the recurring "Conference on Conferences," the Inquiry, we believe, is more fully realizing the legitimate aims of a national conference than could have been realized by a single event as originally planned.[20]

The divergence of the churchmen

As the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life became the Inquiry, as the national meeting assumed less and less importance in the organization's planning, and as the commissions gave way to project groups a number of the early sponsors of the movement left it. As pointed out earlier, Kirby Page was an important participant in the founding group; he played a key role in the first meetings of the Industrial Commission. A letter sent out May 15, 1923 by the Executive Secretaries, probably to members of the Commission, reveals that the Industrial Commission had not been making progress because of a difference of opinion as to method. Page had resigned because he considered himself a research rather than an administrative official. He had refused to assume the responsibility for "wide-spread

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[20]E. C. Carter's annual letter to Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst, December 14, 1926.

group study." The "Reconstitution Committee" had accepted his resignation and employed in his place Professor Sheffield, a man who had not been a part of the founding of the Inquiry and a man who was devoted to the discussion method. He was to make significant contributions to the developing methodology.

The key representative of the churchmen's point of view was from the beginning Dr. William Adams Brown. He had "convened" the first of the Lake Mohonk meetings; he had served as chairman of the National Committee; he had organized the Commission on the Church and set up its program of study. In spite of the fact that he was abroad during the academic year 1922-1923, he maintained an active interest in all the Conference affairs. On December 21, 1923 he presented a memorandum which seems to represent the churchmen's point of view. He wanted to lean heavily on the church during the projected national meeting. He felt that the Conference should be an opportunity for the experts in such fields as race relations, industry, and international relations to "interpret the best thinking" to rank and file Christians. Yet he suggested that the Conference should remain independent of any institution, and that it should cease to exist as soon as the national meeting was held. Bruno Lasker, among others, was highly critical of this

approach, feeling that the Conference should draw from those outside the church as well as from those within it. Dr. Brown remained determined that the Conference should develop as he felt it should. On January 13, 1924 he had a long talk with Miss McCulloch in her own home, explaining his position. A few days later, in a memorandum to Carter, she suggested that Dr. Brown's attempts to act as spokesman and public representative of the Conference was itself the chief problem of the organization. In a deliberate move to deprive him of any effective influence in the organization, she proposed that ". . . we abandon the post of chairmanship of the Executive Committee" and "that the present Administrative Committee fill virtually the chairmanship of the Executive Committee." She pointed out that, although "frank conference" has brought about some surface agreements with Dr. Brown, his point of view remained "foreign to the spirit of our Inquiry." He must have recognized what was happening, for he resigned as chairman of the Executive Committee at the second Mohonk Conference, to be replaced by Galen Fisher. He handed in his resignation from the National Committee at the February 11, 1925 meeting of the Executive Committee. It was accepted. The official summary of the minutes gave as his reason for resignation the increasing demands being made on him by the Union Theological Seminary and other

organizations.

The fate of the commissions

During 1924, 1925, and even into 1926 the official pronouncements of the Inquiry continued to speak in terms of the Commissions. The "membership lists" of November 1, 1925 carried the names of those in the four commissions. At the Executive Committee meetings of 1924 and 1925 reports continued to come in from the Commissions, but they were usually made by the secretaries rather than any of the Commission leaders. At its November 6, 1925 meeting the Executive Committee instructed the Administration Committee and the Secretariat to make the administrative changes necessitated by the move away from the commission centered study program. When Dr. Brown resigned from the Church Commission as it published its study outline, Why the Church?, it ceased to function as a coordinated group, although C. H. Fahs, S. M. Cavert, and John M. Moore continued the Inquiry's interest in the problems of church relationships. The International Commission continued to meet regularly during 1924 and 1925, but the members were never able to re-establish the "fellowship of inquiry" which had characterized their meetings during the preparation of the first study outline in 1923. S. M. Keeny joined the staff in 1925 as Secretary of that commission, but as the minutes of the Executive

Committee meeting clearly stipulated, February 11, 1925, he ". . . would function, like every one else in the secretariat, as a member of the staff serving the whole Inquiry." Both the Industrial and Race Commissions were dominated by their strong and effective Secretaries, who used the members of the Commissions as advisors. Most of the work with industrial and labor groups revolved around Professor Sheffield. It is not insignificant that he reported early in 1926: "The Industrial Commission is somewhat desk-bound just now, engaged in the process of carrying out plans for certain new resources for discussion groups around a specific type of industrial question."[21] Evidently he had become the Commission. Bruno Lasker had taken the lead in the race relations studies from the first day of his employment, October 1, 1923. He wrote or edited the various studies in that field. He was the chief participant in the Commission meetings. Sub-groups were formed to help him in various projects, such as the study of race attitudes in children. As new projects arose for consideration, the boundaries between the Commissions became somewhat confused and eventually disappeared. The office staff in New York had taken the place of the Commissions which had hoped to span the nation with study groups.

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[21] Minutes of the Commission on Race Relations, February 9, 1926.

Conference consultants and discussion experts

By 1929, the end of the period of maturity, it was obvious to Robert M. MacIver, who was called in to help determine the future program, that the Inquiry had become in 1924 and 1925 an organization of conference consultants and discussion experts. He recommended that the Inquiry continue for a period of two to three years in order that these experienced persons might draw together the results of their decade of work together.[22] From 1924 to 1929 they had attended, observed, and helped to manage a number of important conferences both in the United States and abroad. They had made the New York office a national center for the study of discussion techniques, particularly as they are to be applied in national, state, or local meetings. Being privately financed, the Inquirers could offer their services free-of-charge. They could arrange for the publication of discussion manuals and study materials. Their skill in discussion had grown, and their fame had spread. More and more organizations had turned to them for help in working out complicated procedural problems.

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[22] Report on the Inquiry, p. 42. This report was mimeographed and circulated by the Inquiry in 1929. It occasioned considerable discussion and correspondence.

In the record of their work lie the evidences of their two great contributions to the discussion movement: 1) they took the new ways of meeting into a wide variety of organizations; this is the subject of Chapter Five of this study. 2) they sponsored the first concentrated attempt to develop and perfect discussion techniques; this is the subject of Chapter Six. Chapter Four will consider their social creed, the larger framework of thought in which they worked. The remainder of Chapter Three completes the story of the Inquiry in the period when it never quite met the demands which MacIver placed upon it; this chapter also includes a consideration of the publishing program and of the financial arrangements.

The Final Period--1930-1933: New Personnel in a New Inquiry

The reorganized Inquiry began to take shape in early 1930. Following MacIver's recommendations, the Occasional Papers, in the "last number of old series," announced in June "The New Program: A Study of Conference Method." It described in some detail the efforts of the staff to consider all possibilities in the formulation of the new program. MacIver had recommended that the new organization make its chief concern the experimental

verification and further development of discussion and conference methods. All the various ideas as to just what future projects should be were collected and evaluated. A list of twenty-seven projects had been considered by several Advisory Conferences and Administration Committee meetings. The Papers added:

> It was finally decided that a study of conference would utilize the greatest number of criteria which had been set up by Inquiry participants, would touch upon the other suggested major areas, and would enable the Inquiry to conserve the greatest number of values in its past work.

The Papers went on to report that the conference study was already under way. The Inquiry's records of past conference participation were being re-organized and studied for possible use. Some techniques were going to require further testing under somewhat controlled conditions. The officers of the new organization which would carry out this program were: E. C. Carter, chairman; Alfred H. Schoelkopf, treasurer; Mrs. Abel Gregg, executive secretary. A small Administration Committee was to be in charge of the enterprise, and a Board of Participants was to be set up for advisory and consultative purposes.

Carter persuaded Mrs. Gregg to take over as Executive Secretary in January, 1930. She was already quite familiar with the Inquiry's program, having attended the

Asbury Park conferences on conference, probably accompanying her husband, long-time national boys work secretary of the Y.M.C.A. She had also attended many of the sessions of the Columbia course taught by Elliott. She had been secretary of the Commission on Home and Family of the Federal Council of Churches. She had worked in the Y.M.C.A. publications office on the Forum Bulletin, where she had come to know S. M. Keeny. During much of 1930 she was more or less alone in the Inquiry office. She did have some assistance from Elizabeth Watson, who helped with the formulation of the future program. She admitted to Carter, in a report on July 9, that the office was quite different from what it had been in the period of "creativity." She pointed out that the period of evaluation and re-direction had to be a quiet one. She had made considerable changes in Inquiry policy, most of them growing out of her careful study of the MacIver Report. She had set up a new promotion policy designed to spread Inquiry ideas by the widespread sale and use of the stockpile of publications and other materials. She was working closely with Association Press, which had published most of the Inquiry's books. She reported that the Inquiry was receiving warm support in its efforts to carry out MacIver's recommendations for a

comprehensive study of conference method. E. C. Lindeman had been asked to write an interpretation of the whole Inquiry movement, and his initial outline had been well received.

But the new organization was different in nature from the old one. Carter, McCulloch, Lasker, Sheffield, Keeny, and the others had set out in the beginning to reform the methodology men use in working out their common problems. They were not scientists, and they knew it. They had called in experts when they felt expert assistance was needed. They had offered their services to a host of organizations as conference consultants, and in each organization they had trained members to take up and use the new ways of meeting. They were men of good will, seeking new solutions to old problems. But they had all turned away from the Inquiry by 1930. Carter was becoming more and more involved in the rapidly expanding program of the Institute of Pacific Relations. Miss McCulloch had had to give up many of her Inquiry activities when illness forced her to lighten her work load in 1925 and 1926. Lasker had been loaned to the Institute during 1929 to make a special study of Filipino immigration and was to remain on the Institute staff. Professor Sheffield had returned to Wellesley in September, 1928. Keeny had returned to his work with the

Y.M.C.A. earlier that year. These five, with associates like Elliott and Lindeman and part-time participants like C. H. Fahs, C. E. Silcox, and William Heard Kilpatrick, had the accumulated experience in discussion method which might have produced a definitive volume or two on the subject. It is true they did remain keenly interested in the Inquiry program and frequently offered their advice and counsel. They were frequently consulted. But the organization's impetus now came from those who took their places at the center of the movement.

The Washburne Report

In the new organization the Inquiry became a research group devoted to the development and validation of conference methods. Mrs. Gregg recognized that she did not have the training and experience necessary for a quality job of scientific research. Hence Dr. John N. Washburne of Syracuse University was brought in during the summer of 1930 to help develop the "tools of analysis." With the help of Mrs. Gregg, he produced a fifty page document which sketched the outline for a research procedure in conference study.[23] He pointed out in a

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[23]There are several copies of this manuscript in the Inquiry archives.

prefatory comment that he was himself dissatisfied with the results achieved at the time the report was presented. It consisted of a rather long and complex series of questionnaires to be used for gathering data on the planning, procedure, and evaluation of observed conferences. Unfortunately, the Executive Committee had to postpone further development of Dr. Washburne's plans at its July 22, 1931 meeting; the Finance Committee was having difficulty meeting necessary expenses. Evidently Washburne himself did not return to the Inquiry, but his report was used in further development of the "tools." For example, an advisory group met at the Hotel Commodore, October 29, 1930, and considered the use of the various forms. They were the basis from which the "Tools for an Intensive Case Study of a Conference" were developed.[24] These tools were probably used in entirety only at the Mt. Holyoke Conference of the International Student Service, where the conference leaders were in sympathy with the Inquiry's program.

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[24]A thick catalogue of instructions and report forms, designed to assist the comprehensive study of the use of discussion method in a conference. In an interview with the author on May 26, 1957 Mrs. Gregg stated that these forms were much too complex and cumbersome for effective use.

International Conferences, by J. W. Parkes

Early in 1931 Keeny and Mrs. Gregg went to the Payne Fund seeking finances for a study of international youth conferences. They were successful. Immediately they opened negotiations with Captain Lothian Small of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies in Geneva, Switzerland. On April 13, 1931 he wrote to Mrs. Gregg approving the Inquiry's plans for a complete study of the Institute's English language summer school. Both Keeny and Elizabeth Watson spent considerable time in Geneva during the summer, observing a number of conferences and preparing a complete report.[25] Mrs. Gregg included a part of this material in her manuscript, "The Guidance of Conference Groups." However, the efforts of the Inquiry never did produce a discussion handbook for use in international conferences. There was considerable preliminary preparation and writing of parts of the text. When it became obvious that the Inquiry was not going to be able to finish the work, all the materials were turned over to J. W. Parkes, an Englishman who had attended many of the conferences studied. He wrote a hundred fifty page hand-

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[25] A condensed version of this report appeared as "The Inquiry Visits Geneva Summer Schools," Educational Survey, III (March, 1932), 53-69.

book combining the Inquiry material with his own observations and experiences. This was published by the International Student Service in 1933.[26]

Conference in industry

In December, 1930 Glenn A. Bowers joined the Inquiry staff to carry on the study of conference methods in industry. A graduate of Harvard's Graduate Business School, he had had considerable experience in industrial relations in various parts of the country since 1916. He was assisted by Dr. Leona Powell, who also had done work in business research and was particularly qualified in statistical methods. During the summer of 1931 Bowers prepared a Research Manual for the Study of Business Conferences, a study guide including a number of rather elaborate questionnaires to be used in conference evaluation.[27] He established cordial working relations with the Niagara Hudson Power Corporation, probably through the treasurer of the reorganized Inquiry, Alfred Shoelkopf, who was vice-president of the power company. In the last two years of the Inquiry, Niagara Hudson made sizeable contributions

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[26]J. W. Parkes, International Conferences (Geneva, Switzerland: International Student Service, 1933).

[27]Published by the Inquiry in 1931.

to the Inquiry treasury to cover the expenses of the industrial study. Bowers offered a course in industrial relations at New York University in the fall of 1931, using his students wherever possible in bringing in more data from many sources. As his study developed, however, it became evident that he did not intend to write the handbook on business conference which the staff and advisors had expected. Hence early in 1932 Mrs. Gregg recommended that he be asked to raise his own finances.[28] Her colleagues agreed. Bowers did return to the Inquiry in the fall for consultations, but his work should be considered his own, perhaps lightly influenced by the Inquiry movement.

"The Guidance of Conference Groups"

The book which was to have been the Inquiry's final contribution in the field of discussion method, and a summary of all it stood for, was never published. Mrs. Gregg recently found she still had two copies of it stored away in her attic in Vermont.[29] She realized early in 1932 that the work was not going as it should. In a long

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[28]Mrs. Gregg's memorandum to Carter, Sheffield, Bowers, and Keeny, January 15, 1932.

[29]Mrs. Gregg graciously gave both copies to the author, May 26, 1957, and they are still in his possession.

memorandum to Carter, Keeny, Sheffield, and Bowers she stated emphatically that she would have to be freed of administrative details if the work was to be completed in the Inquiry's allotted three years. She was caught in the tedious and sizeable task of sifting from the mass of data the relevant materials on "the guidance of conference groups." With the part-time assistance of Sheffield and others, she finally produced a manuscript of 327 pages. It consists chiefly of reports about various conferences with critical comments interspersed here and there, i.e., at the Holyoke Conference of the International Student Service, data books should have been provided for use of the conferees during the sessions; and, a Steering Committee which included the discussion leaders could have arranged better the interrelationships of the meetings. Although the manuscript cannot be considered an adequate summary of the Inquiry's work, it does reflect the principles and techniques which the Inquiry found and followed through the years.

Social Education, by E. C. Lindeman

As the old Inquiry grew to a close in 1929, there were a number of proposals as to how best to preserve the record of its work. For example, some felt that the

staff and associates should produce a large volume in which different people would contribute chapters on their particular interests. This project never did get underway. In the meantime, E. C. Lindeman proposed that he undertake to write an evaluation of the Inquiry's six years of experiment. This book, subtitled "An Interpretation of the Principles and Methods Developed by the Inquiry During the Years 1923-1933," was published in the spring of 1933.[30] Lindeman did not intend in this book to produce a history of the Inquiry. He frankly admitted in the Preface that he had been highly selective in choice of material. He pointed out that he had written "an illustrative rationale rather than a thorough-going and factual presentation."[31] He cautioned that the book had two themes, "the Inquiry's experiment and the concept of social education itself."[32] In a letter to Mrs. Gregg dated September 7, 1932 he clarified his purpose:

> But, what I am here trying to do is to introduce the Inquiry idea to a larger audience, to infuse the numerous projects, first with a sense of unity, and

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[30]E. C. Lindeman, Social Education (New York: New Republic, Inc., 1933).

[31]Ibid., p. xviii.

[32]Ibid., p. xix.

> second, with a kind of liveliness which the notion lacks so long as it is stated in academic terms, or in research terms.

He did of course have frequent conferences with the staff as a group and with the various individuals. Carter was encouraged to write an introduction; Keeny and Sheffield prepared rough drafts and Carter did finally write a nine-page essay, but it did not appear in the published work. Neither did a list of Inquiry participants appear, as many had hoped it might. The only direct mention of other Inquirers was a dedication to Edward C. Carter, Alfred D. Sheffield, Rhoda McCulloch, Bruno Lasker, and S. M. Keeny. Lindeman probably carried the larger part of the publication burden, for the book came out just as the Inquiry passed out of existence.

Though he did not wish to write a history, Lindeman did devote several chapters to a historical view of the Inquiry's program. He described its development as a shift in point of view from "a technique of persuasion" to "a technique of inquiry" to "an art of reconciliation."[33] He analyzed in some detail the early conflict in the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life between those who championed inquiry and those who championed affirmation. Although he felt that the staff never did

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[33] Ibid., p. 9.

engage in pure research, they did attempt to play the two roles of dedicated research scientist and educator.

> This dual function led to many difficulties and perplexities, not the least of which was embedded in this fact: the new Inquirers came to be the protagonists of a philosophy and a methodology which came to mean almost as much to them by way of conviction as did the earlier preconceived principles of Christian conduct. The Inquiry staff became, indeed, a group of persons skilled in the use of one instrument for dealing with conflict-situations, namely conference method.[34]

He summarized the place of the Inquiry in the society of which it was a part.

> Incomplete as the above summary is, it should suffice to indicate what the Inquiry's general point of view with respect to American life has been. First of all, there has been a persistent effort to disentangle from the complex web of culture those situations which realistically revealed unadjustment. In the second place, there has been a consistent tendency to focus attention upon functional rather than structural elements, and this has inevitably led the Inquiry to a thoroughgoing preoccupation with methods. In the third place, the Inquiry has been primarily concerned with such projects as might offer opportunities for experimentation, i.e., areas of American culture in which new ways of action might be readily tested. Obviously, these concerns have led the Inquiry away from comprehensive and towards small and manageable situations. Consequently, no conclusive affirmations are possible as a result of its ten years of activity. But, this has not been its aim and purpose in spite of the fact that many of its most ardent supporters have from time to time urged it to embark upon more ambitious programs and more comprehensive generalizations. Putting these temptations aside, it has assiduously devoted itself to modest enterprises with the hope, however, that its small beginnings might ultimately become generative points for a more

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[34] Ibid.

> inclusive and creative interpretation of American culture.[35]

Yet, as much as he admired the Inquiry for what it had done, Lindeman saw the weaknesses in its method. He pointed out toward the end of his book in a "note to future Inquirers" that there were at least two large imperfections, "the tendency of absoluteness of methodology," and "the danger of perpetual tentativeness."[36]

The Publishing Program

During its decade of active life, the Inquiry produced a small shelf of study outlines, background materials, reports, and research documents. This publishing program was an integral part of the Inquiry's work. A briefly annotated bibliography, arranged in chronological order, will provide a swift view of its range and scope. It should be noted that more and more of the books went to commercial publishers, especially in the later years. The significant publications were:

1923 --

1. International Problems and the Christian Way of Life. "A syllabus of questions for use by forums and discussion classes." Includes six small chapters of questions, paragraphs from selected writings, and a small bibliography.

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[35] Ibid., p. 28.

[36] Ibid., pp. 182 ff.

1924 --

2. And Who is My Neighbor? "An outline for the study of race relations in America." Chiefly composed of illustrations in the various problem areas in race relations. Includes in an appendix a brief outline of advice for discussion leaders.
3. The Question of "Recognizing the Union" and The Question of the "Right to Strike." Two booklets designed to promote the study of industrial relations problems. Questions, background material, suggestions for discussion and action.
4. A Cooperative Technique for Conflict. By Alfred Dwight Sheffield. A pamphlet describing effective group discussion. A revision of Sheffield's earlier mimeographed essay "The Way of Group Discussion."
5. Draft Treaty of Disarmament and Security. A copy of the Draft Treaty including commentary by one of its authors, Professor James T. Shotwell.

1925 --

6. Discussion Outlines to Help Prepare for the World's Y.M.C.A. Conference to be Held at Helsingfors, Finland, August, 1926. Brief summary of the conference. Question outlines for four discussions.
7. Missions and World Problems. Each of the six chapters is a question outline of one problem area; each includes rather extensive list of quotations as background and reference material.
8. Why the Church? Subtitle: "What Is Its Contribution to the Promotion of the Christian Way of Life in the World?" "A syllabus of questions for use by discussion classes." Twelve chapters of questions and commentary designed as discussion guides on various related topics.

1926 --

9. American Relations with China. "A report on the conference held at Johns Hopkins University, September 17-18, 1926, with supplementary materials, and arranged to be of use to discussion groups, current events clubs, and university classes." This book was published by Johns Hopkins Press, but it was produced by the Inquiry staff in the Conference office, "Top Floor, 129 East 52nd St., New York." It is composed primarily of materials presented at the conference.

10. What Makes Up My Mind on International Questions. "Five outlines for leaders and members of discussion groups." Discussion questions, background materials, attitude tests for use in discussions. Designed to encourage people to use their own experiences in the discussion of international questions.
11. All Colors. "A study outline on woman's part in race relations." Case materials and questions on various related subjects. Brief description of discussion techniques and leadership in appendices.
12. Alien Registration. "A study outline." Primarily an analysis of the problem, with a brief section of suggested discussion questions.
13. Gearing in for Common Tasks. "A conference method of cooperation between agencies applied to girl life in the community." Three brief outlines designed to facilitate discussion of cooperation of agencies in the community.

1927--

14. Nationality, Color, and Economic Opportunity in the City of Buffalo. Report of a study done by Dr. Niles Carpenter, University of Buffalo, in cooperation with the Inquiry. A sociological study.
15. The Worker and His Job. "Outlines for the use of workers' groups." Specific suggestions regarding discussion of seven problems confronting workers. A brief explanation of discussion techniques.
16. The Fairfield Experiment. "The story of one episode in an effort towards a better understanding of Catholics by Protestants, with suggestions for group discussion of religious differences." The results of an experimental attempt of a Protestant group to understand their Roman Catholic neighbors. Suggestions on discussion techniques. Two attitude tests to be used as basis for discussion.
17. Creative Discussion. By Alfred Dwight Sheffield. "Methods for leaders and members of discussion groups." A revised edition of a 1926 pamphlet on group discussion method. Includes a small bibliography.

1928--

18. And Who Is My Neighbor? "An outline for the study of race relations in America." A revised edition of the 1924 volume of the same title.

19. Are There Too Many Churches in Our Town? "A discussion outline." A series of study outlines on the problems of unifying the various denominational bodies.
20. How Catholics See Protestants. By J. Elliot Ross. "A sequel to the Fairfield experiment. The story of an effort towards a better understanding of Protestants by Catholics." A report rather than a series of discussion outlines.

1929 --

21. Business and Ideals. "A syllabus of discussion outlines for groups of business employees." A series of nine discussion outlines, with an introduction on "discussion that gets somewhere."
22. Community Conflict. "A formulation of case studies in community conflict, with discussion outlines." An analysis of the problem area, with discussion outlines in the appendices.
23. Training for Group Experience. "A syllabus of materials from a laboratory course for group leaders given at Columbia University in 1927." Recorded by Alfred Dwight Sheffield. An account of Professor Elliott's course.
24. Race Attitudes in Children. By Bruno Lasker, the Inquiry. "A cooperative study made, under the direction of Bruno Lasker, by members of the Inquiry, a national organization for the promotion of cooperative studies of problems in human relations." A study of the development of racial attitudes in children, based on an extensive collection of case material. Published by Henry Holt and Company.
25. Committees, Their Purposes, Functions, and Administration. By John J. Hader and E. C. Lindeman of the Inquiry. Two of the early papers in the authors' study of employee representation. Published by the American Management Association.

1930 --

26. Jewish Experiences in America. Edited by Bruno Lasker. "Suggestions for the study of Jewish relations with non-Jews." Discussion guides and outlines for the study, by Jews, of their relations with non-Jews. Includes considerable background material and a long reading list.

1931 --

27. Racial Factors in American Industry. By Herman Feldman, Professor of Industrial Relations, Dartmouth College. Published by Harper and Brothers. "Based in part on a study made by the Inquiry under the direction of Bruno Lasker." A sociological study rather than a discussion outline.

1933 --

28. Dynamic Social Research. By John J. Hader and E. C. Lindeman. Published by Harcourt, Brace and Company. A project in research method which grew out of the authors' attempts to study employee representation plans.
29. Social Education. By E. C. Lindeman. "An interpretation of the principles and methods developed by the Inquiry during the years 1923-1933." Published by the New Republic Press. A book combining a historical look at the Inquiry with an interpretation of the concept of social education itself.
30. International Conferences. By J. W. Parkes. "A handbook for conference organizers and discussion leaders." Published, in collaboration with the Inquiry, by International Student Service.

By any standards, the Inquiry's publishing program was a venture of some size. The best comprehensive summary of it lies in an inventory prepared when the old organization gave way to the New Inquiry in early 1930. As of March 11, some 65,000 copies of the first twenty-six titles listed above had been published, and about two-thirds of them had been sold. An average of some 3,000 to 4,000 copies of each of the study outlines were printed, the outstanding exception being the first one on international relations, which had a printing of 13,000. The later and larger books were printed in smaller quantities, averaging

between 2,000 and 3,000, for example 2400 copies of Race Attitudes in Children. Larger stocks of the more recent publications were on hand, as could be expected. However, the inventory reveals that the financial guarantee to Henry Holt and Company for Race Attitudes in Children had been met. Unfortunately this inventory report cannot reveal the publishing figures for the last four books on the above list. But since each of them was written by an individual and published by a commercial publisher, the Inquiry probably had little direct business interest in them. When the Inquiry closed its doors in 1933, there was some stock left on hand. S. M. Keeny has reported that, as director of the Association Press, he took over this stock and disposed of it.[37]

No real pattern emerges in a study of the methods used in preparing Inquiry publications. In the beginning the ideal was the method used by the International Commission in producing its syllabus on international relations; a more or less homogeneous group of people had made the writing itself a cooperative enterprise. But the staff soon took over the actual writing and editing of the material. In the "Race Relations Department" Lasker

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[37] S. M. Keeny interview with the author, May 28, 1957.

consulted large numbers of people, including the members of his Commission. At the end of July, 1924, he pointed out in a progress report on And Who Is My Neighbor? that 175 persons had taken some part in the collecting and recording of case studies. C. H. Fahs prepared the syllabus Missions and World Problems.[38] Sheffield wrote the booklets on discussion method and a number of discussion outlines. Lindeman's work was his own in every case, although he was usually subsidized by Inquiry monies. Being committed to use of the discussion method, the staff would have liked to make each work a group product, but they found it more and more important that they assume the initiative and the burden.

Being a periodical, the Occasional Papers should be viewed apart from the book publishing program. The Inquirers meeting at Lake Mohonk in May, 1924 had realized that a small news sheet would be useful in publicizing the various problems and projects of the Inquiry and in answering the growing demand for study outlines.[39] The first issue came out in March, 1925, and a monthly issue appeared

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[38] Executive Committee minutes, May 4, 1925.

[39] Executive Committee minutes, February 11, 1925.

more or less regularly through 1929. For the first fifteen issues, to November, 1926, the average printing was around 7,000, with a range of 4,000 to 14,000.[40] Those who sent in no response were gradually dropped from the mailing list. A November 17, 1926 report indicated that a total mailing list of 3,220 were receiving them, in all the forty-eight states and twenty-one foreign countries. In his December 14, 1926 letter to Mrs. Elmhirst, Carter stated the purpose of the periodical in a brief paragraph.

> The objects of these occasional papers have been a) to enlist wider participation in the projects of the Inquiry by securing the help of individuals and groups in the use and improvement of a single study outline when the use of one of the more complete texts of the Inquiry was not practicable, b) to acquaint the friends of the Inquiry with its development and to enlist them in a wider variety of its projects, and c) by means of the foregoing, to develop more widely the mood and method of inquiry in scattered and diverse centers and organizations.

The Occasional Papers were devoted chiefly to discussion outlines, conference reports, news items, and book reviews, all the material reflecting the interests and activities of a group of discussion experts.

Financing the Inquiry

In the early period, 1922-1923

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[40] E. C. Carter letter to Mrs. Elmhirst, December 14, 1926.

The Inquiry could never have originated and continued its independent program without sizeable contributions from a small group of people, particularly Mrs. Willard Straight (who became Mrs. Leonard K. Elmhirst in 1925), Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and, in the middle period, Mr. Julius Rosenwald of Chicago.[41] The secretariat never solicited funds from those who received various communications from the office, but there was often a paragraph indicating that financial contributions would be welcome. For example, the "little green folder" which was prepared after the 1924 Lake Mohonk meeting included the following statement:

> It will be necessary to incur expense in maintaining a small Executive Office, in providing the several Commissions with the staff necessary for directing group study, for carrying on research and educational experiment, in printing study outlines and questionnaires and in providing for the expense of the interim and final national conferences, and for approximately one year of activity following the final National Conference to insure the integration of the results of the Inquiry and the National Conference with the permanent organized life of the country.
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> The financing of this venture should be as truly a cooperative enterprise as is the actual inquiry itself. It is hoped, therefore, that the needed funds will be contributed in large part by those who are actively interested in the venture in one or more of its parts.

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[41]The archives include the Price-Waterhouse audit reports as well as numerous memoranda and other reports on financial matters.

When the first issue of the Occasional Papers appeared in March, 1925, it carried an announcement concerning finances similar in tone to the above statement, but it did go on to point out that $2.00 would cover the cost of printing and mailing the paper and to imply that this might be considered a minimum contribution. Yet the large proportion of the finances came from a few people, and from the beginning they were expected to be active participants as well as sources of money.

The Administrative Committee of the Federal Council of Churches had made it clear in the beginning that the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life was to be self-supporting. The various statements which were issued to the growing mailing list during 1922 and 1923 usually referred to the decision of that Committee. The Finance Committee of the Inquiry reported on February 1, 1924 that receipts during the year and a half "preliminary survey and organization period" had totaled: $22,024.95; expenditures: $21,946.88. There are no exact figures giving the source of these funds, but a comprehensive memorandum of December 20, 1923 reported that expenses up to December 31 had been covered by six subscriptions:

Dr. William Adams Brown	$ 500.00
Through Sherwood Eddy	4,000.00
Dwight W. Morrow	2,500.00
Harold Marshall (yet unpaid)	1,000.00
Kenneth Saunders	5.00
Mrs. Willard Straight	15,000.00
	$ 23,005.00

In a section concerning the future budget the Executive Secretaries reported that several subscriptions could be assured for 1924 and for annual subscriptions for a period of years, if the work continued to be of value:

Dr. William Adams Brown	$ 250.00
Cleveland H. Dodge	2,500.00
Dwight W. Morrow	2,500.00
Mrs. Willard Straight	10,000.00
	$ 15,250.00

In their memorandum the secretaries went on to suggest that the best method of securing finances as the needs increased was to seek a number of gifts of at least $500.00 to $1,000.00 or a few "very much more substantial contributions." As the program expanded in importance and cost the office staff, especially E. C. Carter, were seeking adequate new sources of funds.

Mrs. Straight was probably the financial prime mover behind the origin and continuing program of the Inquiry. According to Eric Goldman, the marriage of Willard Straight and Dorothy Whitney in 1911 had intensified the interest of both in religion and social service. "'Use

your wealth to put ideas into circulation,' Straight urged his wife, 'Others will give to churches and hospitals.'"[42] It was in this spirit that they had sponsored Herbert Croly's New Republic in 1914. In discussing the relationship of Willard and Dorothy Straight to the staff of The New Republic, Croly wrote that the organizational experiment was unique in the history of weekly journalism.

> It implied an unusual act of self-denial on the part of Willard and Dorothy Straight, who furnished the money for its publication. They were to finance the new project but they agreed to participate in its management only as one member of the group. While they were to be consulted about all important questions of policy and management, they were not, so it was explicitly understood, to possess the power of vetoing the publication of any article which their associates all considered desirable. Of course they could always withdraw their financial support, if they ceased to approve of the policy of the paper; and in that event it would go out of existence as a consequence of this disapproval, just as it had come into existence as a consequence of their approval; but so long as it existed it was to exist as the mouthpiece of a small society of which they were only a part.[43]

In a later paragraph in his biography, Croly pointed out that Straight was successful in giving the magazine staff almost complete autonomy, even when he emphatically dis-

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[42]Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 173.

[43]Herbert Croly, Willard Straight (New York: Macmillan Company, 1924), pp. 473-474.

agreed with their announced position. "A man to whom generosity and loyalty in friendship was not an ultimate value in life could not have done it."[44]

It was probably in the same spirit that Mrs. Straight after the death of her husband in 1913, played so important a role in the organization of the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life. Yet she was certainly no passive source of revenue. She and Miss Morgan were on the Executive Committee early in 1922. She was a member of the Commission on Christianity and Industry almost from the beginning. Indeed, when the Commission had difficulty determining its proper sphere of research and activity, she was one of a seven-member "Reconstitution Committee" which set out to clarify its role. By that time Sheffield had become its executive secretary. When a "summer cabinet" was needed in 1923 to advise the office staff between Executive Committee meetings, Mrs. Straight and Miss Morgan were among those appointed. In the organizational period, they sat on all the important executive and administrative committees. Miss Morgan was a member of the Commission on Christianity and International Relations and attended most of its meetings. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was listed

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[44] Ibid., p. 565.

as a member of the Commission on Christianity and Race. Bruno Lasker has reported that she took a keen interest in all the work of the Commission; indeed it was she who originated the plan for the study of race attitudes in children during the later years of the Inquiry's life.[45] Those who founded the Inquiry intended for the financial support to come from the participants who were able to contribute.

In the middle period, 1924-1929

During the six-year period of maturity, a relatively small group of wealthy persons continued to carry the chief financial burden of the Inquiry. As revealed in the financial records, the yearly expenditures were as follows:

1924	--	$61, 415.11
1925	--	73, 726.62
1926	--	73, 218.59
1927	--	64, 637.67
1928	--	63, 346.07
1929	--	75, 759.26
		$412, 103.32

Generally speaking, Mrs. Straight (Mrs. Elmhirst) and Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller each carried a third of the yearly expenses. Mrs. Straight's contributions usually totaled about $25,000.00, although in 1928 she added an additional $5,550.00 contribution for a special project. Mr. Rockefeller agreed to provide one dollar for every two raised from

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[45]Lasker interview with the author, August 2[illegible], 1956.

other sources; his contributions ranged from $22,572.11 to $24,730.50.

The original ideal of obtaining adequate financial support from the National Committee and Commission members gradually had to give way. Being in England after 1925, Mrs. Elmhirst could no longer actively participate in Inquiry activities. As the staff embarked on more highly specialized projects, the wealthy layman was somewhat left behind. And gradually new sources of income had to be found to take care of the expansion of the work. Early in 1925 Carter negotiated with Julius Rosenwald for a contribution of $10,000.00 for the year. Rosenwald followed with a contribution of $5,000.00 per year for the remaining four years of the period. In his correspondence with Rosenwald and William Graves, Rosenwald's representative, Carter always mentioned that the leaders of the movement considered a broadcast appeal for funds undesirable. A number of persons made smaller contributions during the six-year period, and many of them were not directly connected with Inquiry projects. The income from the sale of books was intended to cover only the cost of printing. A number of minor contritubions of a dollar or two came in from those who received the Occasional Papers and responded to its

suggestion of a small contribution.

In the final period, 1930-1933

A number of different factors contributed to the difficulty of financing the final years of the Inquiry's life. Many private fortunes were damaged or destroyed by the Great Depression, thus considerably restricting the usual sources of finances. The new staff lacked the contacts and confidence of the wealthy people, and the old Inquirers were preoccupied in other organizations. The program itself lacked the creative drive and exciting promise of the earlier years. Mrs. Elmhirst was never quite enthusiastic about the work of the new group. She had been abroad during the period of most intense activity, being in contact with the work only through letters and reports. Although she contributed $10,000.00 in 1930, she warned that the Inquiry should look elsewhere for its chief financial support.[46] Although the Payne Fund contributed some $12,500.00 during the period toward the study of international youth conferences, it was Mr. Rockefeller who carried the larger part of the burden. He guaranteed an

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[46]Letter from Anna Bogue, Mrs. Elmhirst's private secretary, to E. C. Carter, January 28, 1930.

outright gift of $20,000.00 per year, with an additional gift of one dollar for every two raised in excess of $40,000.00. The total expenditures for the period, revealed in the financial records, were as follows:

1930 --	$41,427.15
1931 --	57,890.30
1932 --	37,326.28
1933 --	5,408.85
	$142,052.58

The small budget for 1933 consisted of funds saved from the 1932 contributions. It was used to cover the expenses of completing the projects and closing the office.

THE LAST MEETING

In 1922 and 1923 the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life had set out to recast the thought and action of Christians throughout America. It was originally sponsored by a formidable list of lay and church leaders. But on March 25, 1933 the final meeting was attended by four persons: E. C. Carter, S. M. Keeny, Mrs. Abel Gregg, and Miss Hilda Austern, who served as secretary and Assistant Treasurer.[47] At this meeting final decisions were made regarding the publication of Lindeman's book on the Inquiry

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[47]Minutes of the Meeting of the Headquarters Executive Committee of the Inquiry, May 25, 1933.

and the handbook on international youth conferences. Mrs. Gregg reported that final arrangements for closing the office were complete. A complete set of Inquiry books and materials had been sent to twenty of the world's great libraries as a permanent deposit. Carter agreed to store the "two steel files of Inquiry archives." Keeny agreed to send out a final letter to the five thousand "Inquiry constituents." Mrs. Gregg reported that the first draft of The Guidance of Conference Groups was complete. She planned to go to Colorado for the early part of the summer, where she would begin work on the final draft. She was to return in the fall to complete publication arrangements. However, she did not return to New York until some years later, and the manuscript was never published. The Inquiry's work was done.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL CREED OF THE INQUIRY

Unlike so many of their contemporaries in the Roaring Decade, who fecklessly played away the years, the Inquirers felt compelled to carry on the work of reform. They worked in the grand traditions of Herbert Croly and the Progressives. John Dewey and Mary Parker Follett had already pretty well formulated the principles which lie at the base of the discussion movement. Walter Rauschenbusch and the other Social Gospelers had taken Reform into the religious life of the United States, and they had given the church and all Christians a new social mission. In its political dimension the nation turned back to its traditional pattern of depending on the individual for initiative; the government was supposed to do as little as possible. Conscientious and sentient citizens could not remain aloof, and even where the principles were difficult to clarify, the need for common action was obvious. The Inquirers attempted, late in 1929, to arrange for the production of a comprehensive statement of their discussion

principles. The projected volume, which had as one of its suggested titles "Conflict and Conference in Modern Life," would have included chapters by each of the Inquirers and by other experts in psychology and sociology. But the book was never written. As Carter explained to Mrs. Elmhirst's representative on August 11, 1930, E. C. Lindeman had assumed the task of writing a report of the Inquiry's work.[1] This book, though it was not considered representative of the whole Inquiry, was based on principles which the Inquirers somehow never made explicit. Before presenting the Inquiry's development and widespread use of discussion techniques, it would be wise to investigate their understanding of these principles. After a brief preliminary statement of the difficulties of such a study, this chapter presents the salient features of the social creed of the Inquiry: the promise of the scientific method, the constructive use of conflict, the participant democracy, the emphasis on means, the aims of discussion. This creed includes the principles now common in discussion theory.

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[1]E. C. Carter letter to Miss Anna Bogue, August 11, 1930. As in the preceding chapter, all citations of letters, memoranda, and reports refer to materials in the Inquiry archives, in the possession of the author.

One who attempts to analyze and evaluate "Inquiry" principles, methods, or techniques must confront several formidable difficulties. In the first place, of the many Inquirers and associates, only a few studied group discussion itself. Alfred Dwight Sheffield was perhaps the only staff member who thought carefully and wrote frequently about discussion, and his work provided insight and outlook for the others. Bruno Lasker did not write a comprehensive treatment of discussion until twenty years later,[2] though he, like all the others, served frequently as a discussion leader and consultant. It was probably he who wrote many of the conference analyses in the Occasional Papers. Of all the Inquirers Harrison S. Elliott was the most careful and profound student of discussion itself. His understanding was already a mature one when he helped to found and shape the Inquiry in 1922. His Process of Group Thinking,[3] produced partly from his experience in the Inquiry's Columbia course, remains the best early treatment of the subject. E. C. Lindeman's interests remained centered in professional social work throughout his years in

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[2]Bruno Lasker, Democracy through Discussion (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1949).

[3]Harrison S. Elliott, The Process of Group Thinking (New York: Association Press, 1923).

the group; even his book about the Inquiry was designed as a study of "social education."[4] William Heard Kilpatrick remained an educator, serving Inquiry projects chiefly as a consultant; he was particularly responsible for bringing the new educational psychology into discussion theory. All five of these discussion theorists were active in various roles outside the Inquiry program, though none of them actually drew a line between one type of work and another. Of all the Inquirers, these five carried the chief burden in developing Inquiry methods and techniques, though they shared with all the others a common social creed.

A parallel difficulty in an analysis of Inquiry principles, methods, and techniques is that many who may have made some significant contribution did not write down what they found and believed. H. C. Carter, for example, never wrote about his experience and understanding of discussion, though he was urged to do so. Certainly he gained a rich fund of experience in his work in the Y.M.C.A., the Inquiry, and the Institute of Pacific Relations. Rhoda McCulloch was a chief proponent of dis-

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[4]E. C. Lindeman, Social Education (New York: New Republic, Inc., 1933).

cussion method in the Y.M.C.A., and she led many of the pioneering discussion-type conferences. Yet she has never attempted to bring together her own contributions to the developing theories and practices, other than in an occasional memorandum or letter. S. M. Keeny, still active as an international civil servant in the United Nations, regards his years in the Inquiry as valuable preparation for his career that followed,[5] but his published work does not include books and articles on discussion. These three, and others, probably made a considerable contribution, but there are no real indications of its size. Certainly they, in common with all the Inquirers, never laid claim to this technique or that one. Indeed, this tendency toward anonymity is itself a difficulty of some size. The books were sometimes given an author only to meet the traditional demands of publishers and copyright. Though Bruno Lasker edited, and wrote much of, the Occasional Papers,[6] the Papers were always presented as the work of the whole Inquiry.

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[5] S. M. Keeny interview with the author, May 23, 1957.

[6] C. C. Carter letter to President John Hope, April 28, 1930.

MacIver stated in his Report on the Inquiry that the passion for anonymity created more problems than it solved.[7] Yet none of the Inquirers tried to identify their own work as apart from that of the group. Sheffield's comment on the matter, in a letter to Mrs. Gregg, is probably typical.

> Certainly let Sunny Elliott make free to use any part he wants from Business and Ideals. And, by the way, you and Mr. Carter should not feel that you need my assent on a question of other people's use of Inquiry publications in which I had a hand. They were all made to be got into circulation--it doesn't matter over whose signature.[8]

A third area of difficulty in a study of the Inquiry's work is that none of the active participants ever wrote a comprehensive account of its results. As the old organization gave way to "the New Inquiry" in 1930, there were several attempts to plan and produce a volume which would bring together all the matured understandings achieved in the six years of work. But the attempts failed. The MacIver Report contains many illuminating comments about the principles and techniques, but MacIver set out to study the organization, with only incidental consider-

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[7]Robert M. MacIver, Report on the Inquiry (Mimeographed and circulated by the Inquiry, 1929), p. 25.

[8]Sheffield letter to Mrs. Gregg, November 13, 1930.

ation of its history. Indeed, the chief basis for his recommendation that the Inquiry continue for two to three years was that it should complete its work by creating a conclusive and comprehensive summary. Lindeman's Social Education, as Lindeman himself pointed out, was not designed to fill this need, and represented his own point of view. Parkes's book, International Conferences,[1] drew heavily on Inquiry resources and materials, but Parkes himself was not part of the group, and his book was written far from the New York office. As the new Executive Secretary, Mrs. Abel Gregg set out to write the final report, but her book was never published. It is actually more a report on several conferences she attended than it is a study of the Inquiry. Twenty years later, Lasker wrote Democracy through Discussion, a fresh interpretation of the Inquiry approach, but this book, too, makes no attempt to identify and evaluate the results of the experiments. All of these books represent the Inquiry in some light, and all of them drew heavily on its principles and techniques, but none of them is a successful

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[1] J. W. Parkes, International Conferences (Geneva, Switzerland: International Student Service, 1933).

attempt to present just what the Inquiry discovered about discussion in its ten years of experiment and investigation.

In spite of these difficulties, however, the principles, methods, and techniques which "The Inquiry" used and developed can be identified and evaluated. Its place in the discussion movement can be determined. Wherever an individual's contribution can be identified, he can be given due credit. Yet no Inquirer would ever set himself apart from the whole organization, and it would not only be impossible to separate the individual strands, but unwise as well. What emerges in a careful analytical study is a composite picture, composed of many different facets. The men who made the Inquiry shared common points of view and common attitudes toward political and social questions. In essential things they were united. They shared their conference experience and spoke a common language. Those who disagreed with the central group gradually lost interest and drifted away. Those who remained took up the tasks of democracy and applied social science where Dewey and Rauschenbusch and Follett had left them.

The Characteristics of the Social Creed

After examining all the evidence, Robert M. MacIver concluded that the Inquiry did have a commonly shared set of ideas, central to all the experiments and consultations. The Inquirers themselves were never so explicit as he was. Perhaps they were simply being true to their predecessors in the movement. While discussing the programmatic vagueness of Herbert Croly and John Dewey, the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. points out: "This common fuzziness may have been due to a faith in experimentation so deep that neither was willing to prejudice the experiments by anticipating the results."[10] Certainly the Inquirers were addicted to the common faith which motivated the liberals of the time. The best illustration of their vagueness in regard to principles is found in the minutes of the Administration Committee meeting of June 28, 1929. In outlining the recommendations for the New Inquiry, which was to arise from the old, it listed four "central ideas underlying the new organization at its beginning":

1. That things (events, ideas, usages) are changing faster than ever before, and from these changes rise a stream of ever new problems.

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[10]The Crisis of the Old Order (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), p. 133.

2. That we need a new kind of education to meet this tide of ever coming problems, an education that sees itself not as preparatory but as continuing throughout life.
3. That a social problem has not been well solved until things are going better, not only in an outer way, but also within the mind and hearts of those who had beforetimes been set against each other.
4. That these things can be better done through an outlook on life which holds its ideas and assumptions always open to change if a better control shall demand it.

Perhaps one can sympathize with Mrs. Gregg's sincere attempts to bring some order out of the chaos she inherited: Yet these statements do point up at least two facets of the social creed of the Inquiry, fundamental beliefs which were shared with all those who would bring science to bear on the problems of man. The first is a thoroughgoing preoccupation with change; the second, a firm belief that men can work out their own problems with better education. The characteristic method of this education, of course, is discussion.

In his study of the Inquiry and social education, Lindeman finally summarized the social theory of the group in sixteen assumptions. These should be taken, of course, as Lindeman's opinion, but they also reflect the commonly held point of view. Some of them relate to techniques rather than principles, but they should all be listed here. This list, too, indicates the vagueness about fundamental

principles, though Lindeman was perhaps the most incisive thinker among the Inquirers.

1. That difference is a given datum in human experience as in all Nature, and that therefore tension, friction, and conflict in human affairs are always to be expected.
2. That human wants (impulses) are similar but that capacities vary and that the social problem inheres in this condition.
3. That human differences are not absolute but may all be arranged in grade series, and that therefore these differences may be regarded as complementary or supplementary rather than as mutually exclusive.
4. That, in spite of our differences, there exists a compulsion which obliges us to seek some form of cooperative and collaborative living.
5. That our social problems will not be resolved by mere reference to facts and experts, that is, by the methods of naive positivism.
6. That the most important facts in a social situation are not susceptible of observation and analysis by an external observer.
7. That significant social facts are facts viewed within the given situation and recognized by participants.
8. That the role of the expert in social situations is to supplement and implement a learning process carried on by the participants, including himself.
9. That the role of the leader in a social situation is to discover and assure the integrative possibilities of participants.
10. That integration within the social sphere implies an ongoing process of unifying but not of unity conceived in static terms.
11. That the path toward integration lies along lines of gradients of need, desire, and aspiration, and that there exists no absolute goal which will bring maximum satisfaction of human wants.
12. That the discovery of appropriate gradients is dependent upon the utilization of a dynamic rather than a static logic.
13. That the law of gradients allows for differences and convictions and permits unifying action within a context of diversity.

14. That true learning is always insight or understanding derived from the interpenetration of facts with feelings.
15. That social values as well as goals are emergent and not to be regarded as given.
16. That patterns of integrative conduct may be acquired only through learning which is also experiencing.[11]

This long quotation is rich in the heritage which the Inquirers knew and used: the faith in education which they shared with Follett and Dewey, the Follettian emphasis on integration, the distrust of absolutes, the insistence that the scientific investigation of human problems must be warm with feeling.

Though Lindeman's statement of the social creed of the Inquiry is more detailed, MacIver's is somewhat more illuminating. He concluded that the Inquiry did have a bias and that it crept into the publications, in spite of all the efforts to make them unbiased. He recognized the Inquiry's attempt to present all sides of the questions as one worthy of effort, but he suggested it was one virtually impossible of attainment. He found four "tenets underlying all the work of the Inquiry":

1. That there are areas of disintegrating social conflict which do not involve inherent human differences, but differences due to the failure to think things through, to see the position of the other side, often due to mere ignorance or prejudice regarding the issues of the conflict.

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[11]Lindeman, Social Education, p. 195.

2. That a scientific approach is possible which can be applied to these areas and which, without assuming in advance the conclusions to be reached and without propagandist impulsion will lead, if honestly followed, to the removal of prejudices and the establishment of social harmonies.
3. That even when differences are inherent, in the sense that they are rooted in temperament and disposition, they take forms which needlessly prevent the understanding of one by the other.
4. That in such areas, by presenting the evidence, whether they are facts of an objective nature or simply the true attitudes of those who are in conflict with one another, an understanding can be reached which not only limits the ground of difference but also prepares the way for their harmonious cooperation in matters lying outside the issue in question.[12]

MacIver summarized this creed in a few phrases as: "an expression of the value and potentiality of social harmony, regarded either as a spiritual condition in itself worth while or else as a preliminary to the removal of various maladjustments in society which are presumed to depend on prejudices and attitudes of conflict.[13]

The promise of the scientific method

No matter what statement is made of the Inquiry's social creed, it would have to include as a first postulate the emphasis on scientific thinking. Not all the Inquirers

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[12]MacIver, Report, p. 13.

[13]Ibid., p. 14.

agreed with Lindeman that the organization tended to become less religious and more secular as it changed through the years. But they were all children of the Age of Science, and they would have agreed with his statement of the two essential interpretations of the democratic way of life: "a) Democracy is not a goal to be achieved but a mode of conduct, and b) the success of Democracy depends upon bringing this mode of conduct into the closest possible relationship with Science and scientific method."[14] Lindeman may well have been more a "scientist" than the others, for he frequently emphasized flexibility, control, and careful method. E. C. Carter noted, in his annual letter to Mr. Rosenwald, January 26, 1927, that there had been a change of emphasis in the Inquiry; it had become "dominantly experimental" early in its history. Like others, Carter recognized this emphasis early in the Inquiry's history; for example, at the March 19, 1926 methodology conference he referred to the techniques to be followed as "a more scientific approach to problems."[15] Bruno Lasker was never content to classify himself as a scientist; indeed, he felt that the Inquiry moved too much

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[14]Lindeman, Social Education, p. 12.

[15]Minutes of the meeting, March 19, 1926.

toward scientific research as such in its later years. Yet in his American Review article he suggested that ordinary persons frequently had to make decisions on the basis of "common sense" data, and he insisted that this could be done carefully and effectively. He said:

> We shall not demand too much precision in the evaluation of "data" but only so much as is necessary to arrive at practicable working plans; thus we shall point out that midway between scientific evidence and pure guess there is an area of cumulative impression, whether personal or handed on through tradition, an area which is by no means unproductive of certain rough-and-ready data which with adequate safeguards, may be as valid as the result of a more methodical test.[16]

Years later, in his Democracy through Discussion, Lasker considered what Dewey had termed "reflective thinking" at length and described it succinctly.

> Concerted thinking in group discussion is never a hundred per cent scientific, but it can approximate scientific procedure to the extent of admitting only what is relevant, of asking answerable questions in their logical order, or remaining aware of the psychological by-products of the verbal interchange.[17]

Lasker's is probably the clearest statement of the Inquiry's view that the informed layman has a key role to play in every community and in every activity. Though he may not be a scientist, he can think carefully, using the scientific

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[16]"The Inquiry," American Review, IV (July-August, 1926), 1-10.

[17]Lasker, Democracy, p. 242.

method as his guide.

The constructive use of conflict

Like the Inquirers who followed her, Mary Parker Follett considered conflict the most important single condition for social progress. Indeed, her concept of the "constructive use" of conflict was a major contribution to the discussion movement. In his review of her Creative Experience H. A. Overstreet wrote:

> Most Utopias are sentimental evasions. They depict a bliss which can never be. Most of the "hard realities" are truculent pessimisms. They depict a ruthlessness of nature and man which is largely of their own limited imagining. Both break on the hard rock of conflict. It is a masterly achievement to have taken this hard rock of conflict and used it as a foundation stone for the uprearing of our civilization.[13]

Years earlier, in his attempt to bring the theory of evolution into political science, Bagehot had written of the use of conflict. But he was more concerned with the balance between legality and variability in a political society than with the invigoration which conflict, honestly accepted and used, brings to men living together.[14] Miss Follett suggested that neither of the two traditional views toward conflict, both extremes, was satisfactory.

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[13] H. A. Overstreet, "Creative Experience," New Republic, XXIX (July 16, 1924), 214-215.

[14] Walter Bagehot, Physics and Politics (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1873), pp. 41 ff.

One was the old "tooth-and-claw theory" that the man who could fight the longest and win the most was the one who should win. The other was based on the dream of a conflictless world or a fundamental change in human nature. For Miss Follett, conflict is simply a fact of life, always to be confronted and used. She identified its true function as the clarifying of the desires of the persons involved. Conflict is "a normal process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment of all concerned."[20] When she spoke on conflict to the Bureau of Personnel Administration in January, 1925, she developed this point of view further. There she suggested that the traditional view of conflict led inevitably to resolution by either domination or compromise, and she wanted groups to achieve "integration," wherein all desires and all facts could be brought out into the open for evaluation in the light of the common goals. The methods of group discussion should be used to channel the controversy into productive work.[21]

The men who made the Inquiry followed Mary Parker

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[20] Mary Parker Follett, Creative Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924), p. 301.

[21] Mary Parker Follett, Dynamic Administration (Edited by Henry C. Metcalf and L. Urwick; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), pp. 30 ff.

Follett's lead in understanding the place of conflict. Several of Lindeman's list of sixteen assumptions emphasized that difference is a part of all real life. The first one suggested that conflict should always be expected. Others reflected his firm belief that conflict can be properly used only to reveal true desires and feelings. He stated this point concisely in an earlier chapter of Social Education:

> Difference is, then, a primary concept for the Inquiry's system of thought. Confronted with a conflict-situation, its first inquiry becomes: To what extent may the participants, granted that their differences are important, utilize these differences for purposes of enhancing their individual as well as their group power.[22]

At the beginning of the Inquiry's decade Sheffield identified two essential aspects of self-training for those who would take "a responsible part in advancing a better way of life": 1) "a constructive attitude towards controversy," and 2) a sound knowledge of "the guiding posts of progressive argument."[23] The fact that he changed the title of his first work, The Way of Group Discussion to A Cooperative Technique for Conflict indicates the central

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[22] p. 13.

[23] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, A Cooperative Technique for Conflict (New York: National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, 1924), p. 3.

place he gave it in his thinking. He wished to emphasize the creative rather than the destructive elements in conflict. He said in one article:

> True conflict, as recent writers point out, is a state of seemingly incompatible attitudes and purposes. Fighting is one way of acting in a conflict situation --a socially wasteful and usually futile way. Discussion does not expect to avert conflicts, which may arise from valuable differences in personality and outlook. It does expect to avert fighting, by invoking a group technique for getting differences fruitfully adjusted.[24]

In Democracy through Discussion Lasker dod not give conflict so central a place; his book was designed to present discussion in its historical American context. But in considering the function of an organization's program committee he did point out that almost any subject, if pushed far enough, would become controversial. "Unless some kind of mental chloroform is used, even the most pallid topic may develop in a way to touch tender nerves."[25] He suggested that most controversies tend to evaporate if continuing emphasis is laid on "clarification of facts and issues." He said:

> Controversy, in short, is the lifeblood of worthwhile discussion, provided it does not descend to

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[24]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "Getting Good Discussion in the Union Meeting," American Federationist, XXXIV (April, 1927), 414-418.

[25]Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, p. 116.

> contentiousness and is limited to questions of judgment; provided, further, that the contestants share two basic attitudes which prevent its degeneration: trust in rational method and a basic sense of fellowship.[26]

Later in the book he warned that unless men of good will train themselves in the arts of conciliatory living, social relations will be determined by those who wish to exploit conflict situations for their own benefit.[27] Like Lasker, Elliott recommended that differences, not only of opinion but of fact as well, be brought out into the open. Matters of fact would yield to careful research and expert testimony. Matters of opinion require discussion, where values can be weighed and points of emphasis carefully considered.[28] In his Report on the Inquiry MacIver identified Mary Parker Follett as the most determined proponent of the principles of integration, wherein ". . . differences are not finally thought of as obstacles in the way of unity, but rather as its conditions, the ingredients, as it were, out of which unity is created."[29]

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[26] Ibid., p. 118.

[27] Ibid., p. 163.

[28] Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, p. 54.

[29] p. 10.

He suggested that Sheffield, Kilpatrick, and Elliott were chief among those who brought this principle into the Inquiry. They wanted to take up Miss Follett's challenge that the means of constructively using conflict needed careful experimental study.

The participant democracy

Like so many of his contemporaries, Harrison S. Elliott came out of World War I with high hopes for Woodrow Wilson's world democracy. The two study outlines he had prepared in 1918 were titled A New World Democracy and Building a New World.[30] He prepared them to guide study and discussion which would put the President's great aims into the realm of practical realities. Ten years later, in The Process of Group Thinking, he continued the same emphasis, titling his first chapter "A Methodology for Democracy," and beginning:

> The aim of true democracy is to secure the active participation of every individual up to the limit of his capacity in the conduct of all his social, vocational, and political affairs. It is intended to be all-inclusive with the qualification noted; it is meant to take cognizance of the immature child, of the moron, and even of the criminal. It enhances every social relationship, whether of a president

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[30]Both were published in New York by Association Press, 1918.

> to all American citizens, or a man to a single companion.[31]

He went on to point out that the citizens have to learn how to participate in the groups of which they are a part. He wished to replace the representative government of the United States with "a more truly democratic form of group participation."[32] He pointed out that the ranks of the skeptics are filled with those who have never had the experience of participation in a democratic enterprise. He offered "group thinking" as "a possible methodology for securing democratic participation." Indeed, he made democracy and participation virtually synonymous.

> Democracy will never reach its goal in municipal, state, and national life until some method is developed by which the people may really share with the representatives they have chosen in the working out of problems of government. Group thinking, a technique for democratic participation, involves the sharing of all, each according to his ability.[33]

Certainly Elliott was influenced by the "group principle" enunciated by Mary Parker Follett in The New State, though his ideas probably formed parallel to hers during the war period. He did refer to her books from time to time and

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[31]Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, p. 1.

[32]Ibid., p. 4.

[33]Ibid., p. 16.

included them in his bibliographies. Her emphasis was similar to his. She promised, with some exuberance, that group organization is the twentieth century's new method in politics, the best answer to the conflicts of capital and labor, of government and citizen, of nation and nation. She wanted to arouse all the citizens to vital participation in the nation's affairs, in neighborhood groups and occupational groups especially. In an appendix to The New State she wrote of the group training necessary for the realization of true democracy, using as her model her own work with the School Centres of Boston.[34] She repeatedly urged the kind of experiment and scientific investigation which the Inquiry set out to do. Elliott was a key person in this enterprise.

But all the Inquirers shared the vision of the new democracy. Sheffield wrote, at the beginning of his very first work in the Inquiry:

> A forward movement in the spiritual life of society may be sought in two ways. We may look to leadership, to great spokesmen of the spirit, who shall draw a people onward by the sheer power of championship to win for ideals a social response; or we may look to a creative social process, to groups of every-day folk, who, stirred only by the promptings of their own unsatisfied natures, shall take counsel to

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[34] Mary Parker Follett, The New State (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918), pp. 363 ff.

> achieve in the common experience a winnowing of ideals and a reordered life. For society today we shall probably rest our hope chiefly in the second way of progress.[35]

He went on to point out that modern social life has become vastly complicated and that no situation can ever be considered really static. In an article in a labor paper he identified a weakness of democracy and described it in these terms:

> A good deal of the faulty working of democracy--especially in our popular government--is due to the fact that it works in traditionary forms that were set up long before any scientific study had been made of the processes of thought and emotion that develop in large controversial situations. Today we have the beginnings of this sort of study, and it promises well for democracy that leaders of organized labor are seeking to turn this study to account in developing procedures in labor meetings that will prove socially sound and fruitful.[36]

This article is a good example of how the Inquiry translated the theories about democracy into practical programs of action. Sheffield saw the trade union as a small self-governing body where deliberative methods could be used with profit. He recognized that many of the union meetings could not be considered the proper place for a deliberative

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[35]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, The Way of Group Discussion (Mimeographed and circulated by the Inquiry, 1923), p.1.

[36]Sheffield, "Getting Good Discussion," op. cit.

committee: business meetings, social gatherings, morale-boosting sessions. He recommended that the membership be divided into relatively small face-to-face groups where the participants could talk together without breaking into crowd-minded factions. He suggested a V-shaped or semicircular seating pattern. He urged that a strict parliamentary procedure be avoided because it encouraged men to make up their minds too soon on solutions. He suggested that certain members be trained to act as discussion leaders, as social technicians ". . . with an almost clinical skill in drawing people out, in putting questions without exploding prejudices, and in keeping the talk really expressive of a group-thinking process."[37] Like Elliott, Sheffield was working in the world of immediate affairs, testing the principles in practice, developing techniques to meet specific needs.

As a social philosopher and social worker, E. C. Lindeman, too, had an abiding faith in democracy. Robert Gessner has written of him: "He sought any road on which he might join travelers toward the democratic way of life.

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[37] Ibid.

This was his abiding vision: his faith in what America promises. In a time of experiment and confusion he moved as an exemplar of democracy in action. He infused fresh confidence in our inheritance and in ourselves."[38] In his collection of Lindeman's work Gessner made "democracy" the central theme around which he grouped the writings. In Social Education Lindeman wrote of the new concept of democracy which had motivated the Inquiry's work. It had stood against the old dogma that the citizen is represented in the mechanisms of government and that those who did not vote with the majority do not contribute to "ruling." He said of the Inquiry:

> It assumed at the start that Democracy had never become a true project, that the rise of urbanism, industrialism, and specialism in American life had somehow shunted the experiment from its tracks. Moreover, Inquiry collaborators assumed that Democracy could never be achieved as long as it was conceived as an end, a goal to be won by means of direct attack.[39]

Some years later he put this Inquiry principle into one sentence: "The key word of democracy is participation."[40]

But when these Inquirers spoke of democracy, they

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[38]Eduard C. Lindeman, The Democratic Man (Edited by Robert Gassner; Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), p. 7.

[39]pp. 24-25.

[40]Lindeman, Democratic Man, p. 167.

were referring to much more than the government as such. Lasker, who carefully traced out the roots of American democracy, made his essential frame of reference clear:

> We shall use it, as Americans use it every day, as covering attitudes as well as a form of government, a way of living and of behavior as well as a theory. Democracy, for our purpose, is an endeavor so to regulate the relations between human beings that each one shall exercise the rights of a free person, and that all shall, to the extent of their ability, take part in the making of decisions that govern the social entities to which they belong--the family, the community, the voluntary association, the nation.[41]

We felt that considering democracy a way of life would help to raise the participation level. Kilpatrick, too, differentiated between democracy as a type of government and as a way of life. Some twenty years after the Inquiry he clarified the point in his Philosophy of Education:

> The development of the meaning of democracy beyond the area of actual government has, it appears, grown out of a more extended consideration of the proper aim of democratic government, namely, to ensure to each individual the fair and equal chance to live fully as a conscious and self-directing person. Such an emphasis naturally carries the aim of democracy beyond those areas of life in which the compulsion is too crude to be effective, where instead the inner attitude of moral obligation must be our reliance. It is with this stress on inner attitude that democracy reaches beyond mere government and becomes instead a way of life.[42]

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[41]Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, p. 24.

[42]William Heard Kilpatrick, Philosophy of Education (New York: Macmillan Company, 1951), pp. 126-127.

The emphasis on means

When Miss Follett defined her concept of integration, she made it quite clear that she was speaking of more than intellection. Not only is integration far more fruitful than compromise or domination; it is also more practical, closer to the human realities. ". . . Integration, the resolution of conflict, the harmonizing of differences, must take place on the motor level, not on the intellectual level. We cannot get genuine agreement by mere discussion in conference. . . . Genuine integration occurs in the sphere of activities, and not of ideas or wills."[43] The MacIver Report indicated that the preoccupation with methods, or means, became the central concern of the Inquiry as it made its practical exhortation: "Come, let us get together, and let us think together." By May, 1925 the main work of the Inquiry had become, said MacIver, two tasks: 1) assisting various organizations in preparing for study, discussion, and conferences, and 2) preparation and publication of a number of guides and outlines to assist groups in the discussion of various social questions.[44] The record of the organization's work is

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[43]Follett, Creative Experience, p. 150.

[44]MacIver, Report, p. 6.

filled with statements indicating that the Inquirers were more concerned about means than they were about ends. Sheffield, writing of "a growing doubt as to the efficacy of setting people right by telling them things," posited two main causes for the Inquiry movement: "1) a growing change of basis in modern life from individual relations to organized group relations; 2) a change of emphasis in modern educational thought from an emphasis on affirming ideals to one of stimulating processes, with a constant educative analysis of the experience by which ideals are really learned." He went on to point out that the Inquiry was working in organizations, fellowship groups, and action groups to learn how common experience might be turned to most educational advantage.[45] This meant, of course, a heavy emphasis on the means of ameliorating social conflicts. The 1923 edition of And Who Is My Neighbor? carried an end-paper statement of purposes which included the following:

> The Inquiry is seeking a revolutionary end by evolutionary means. It is attempting a titanic task with no implements save a school of thought. Most reform organizations focus on ends. The Inquiry focuses on means. If international conflicts are to be managed, the American people must find new means of managing the little conflicts of everyday life--between parents and

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[45] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "The Inquiry as Cooperative Study of Experience," Religious Education, XXI (April, 1926), 195-197.

> children, village cliques, religious rivals, racial factions, and industrial antagonisms. The Inquiry's publications and projects are implements and experiments to enable groups representing diverse interests to deal cooperatively with conflicts of mind-set and desire. It is seeking ways to separate the creative from the destructive elements in conflict.

Putting it in somewhat more general terms, Lasker summarized the essential mission of the Inquiry:

> The mastery of democratic procedure is an art. To be sure, it requires a certain predisposition of personality; and an ideal norm of human relations must be the guiding principle. But like all arts it has characteristic and indispensable techniques. As in music and short-story writing, so in democratic behavior there can be no perfection without practice. The realm of democracy in our social life will be immensely widened if we seriously try to learn these techniques. Essentially that means we must acquire their mastery through exercise; we must acquire the skill of adapting a few simple principles to all kinds of situations.[46]

The aims of discussion

Like Dewey and Follett, the Inquirers included in their social creed no real concern for ultimate things, truths, or ends. Yet they were quite concerned about the direction of the group process, and they frequently discussed the immediate aims of discussion. Most of those who studied discussion itself were educators--particularly Kilpatrick, Sheffield, Elliott, and Lindeman--and hence

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[46]Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, p. 4.

it should come as no surprise that they made education a prime aim. Though Lasker was a journalist rather than an educator, he made this one of the chief themes of Democracy through Discussion. As he described it:

> The greatest development of discussion procedures has been under the auspices of organizations and institutions concerned more with the achievement of educational results than with that of immediate practical results. Churches and schools for adult education, women's clubs and schools of citizenship, workers' and young people's associations, here and there a teachers' college--and during the last war also special departments in the armed forces--have gone far to make group discussion a recognized method of education for democracy.[47]

In 1933 Hader and Lindeman wrote of three types of committee procedure: the Socratic, the developmental, and the discussion method. Though they felt that the third was not being widely used, they described it in some detail.

> This newer type of committee procedure should, perhaps, be called the "educational method," since it is based upon a pedagogical principle, namely, the notion that interest in a learning experience can only be maintained at a fruitful level when the participants are dealing with a true problem and when they approach it in the mood of discovery. This principle of so-called "progressive education" includes far-reaching corollaries of both a philosophical and a methodological character. The use of discussion as the instrument for actually discovering solutions in committees implies a kind of faith in human nature which is absent in the two above methods; the chairman becomes the teacher who guides the procedure but not with respect to the end, or solution; he stands prepared to abide by the consequences of the conclusion

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[47] Ibid., p. 53.

> which represents the group, its knowledge, and its purpose; his attention is focused upon method, upon the means which the group utilizes in reaching its decisions.[48]

Lindeman titled his summary of the Inquiry's work Social Education, and in it he repeatedly emphasized his belief that a large share of the value of discussion is educational. For example, he said:

> All of this will conform to a specific pattern for social education which may be summarily stated thus: social situations may be rendered flexible and thereby resolvable by means which give assurance that participants derive education from the process of social problem-solving. In other words, social education is not merely a preparation for social experience but also a derivative of such experience.[49]

But more than any of the others, it was William Heard Kilpatrick, the foremost of the progressive educators, who identified, explored, and taught the educational values of group discussion. He wanted to bring the latest scientific research to bear on problems of pedagogy. When he served as consultant on educational method at the second Conference on Conferences in 1926, he spoke at length on "the laws of learning." His analysis was similar to that he made at a number of discussion conferences, including

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[48]John J. Hader and E. C. Lindeman, Dynamic Social Research (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1933), pp. 80-81.

[49]p. 137.

the 1927 meeting of the Institute of Pacific Relations. He wanted to find the characteristics common to all learning experience. He outlined what he had found under six headings: 1) "Whatever is learned is behavior that carries itself." Most behavior is the result of automatic adjustments of the person to his environment. Hence the educator must be concerned with "the inner attitude" and "the wider setting" as well as the more direct results of the experience. 2) "Whatever we do with success and satisfaction, we tend to do again. . . . Whatever we do with failure and annoyance, we tend not to do again." Hence the educator must provide the environment for the creation of a proper attitude, for the attitudes determine the direction of the practice. 3) Most of our likes and dislikes come from the "associations" surrounding some previous experience. 4) Therefore we always learn more than one thing at a time--a number of "attendant learnings" accompany every "primary learning." 5) "A fifth factor in learning is the mind-set." The educator must begin with the student where he is. 6) "Other things being equal, the more often you use a thing, within limits, the more permanently will it be built as a habit and added to you. But if you let it alone and don't use it, it gradually loses its strength." Hence the educator provides desirable

attitudes and activities to take the place of the undesirable ones. When Kilpatrick had finished leading the discussion of the laws of learning, the Conference on Conference went on to apply these laws to their own immediate problems. They decided, for example, that they should arrange pre-conference group study, use the situation approach, and bring in competent resource people.[50] Kilpatrick spoke of these laws of learning at many meetings, always attempting to apply them to the immediate problems of the organization.

Yet the Inquirers recognized that education alone will not solve social problems, and they all suggested, with varying emphasis, that a second aim of discussion is action. Sheffield, who usually limited himself to the educational aim in his handbooks, made perhaps the clearest statement of the distinction between the two aims:

> . . . we must recognize that discussion may have either of two kinds of objective: it may seek a decision looking towards action, or it may seek simply the education of its participants. In a conference on disarmament government representatives hope to make their discussion reach real accord on mutually satisfactory things to do. In an educational discussion on the issue the group of course will not go that far. It will not go home with the armament situation solved. But it

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50"The Second Asbury Park Conference," Occasional Papers, July-August, 1926.

> will have learned something of the solvability of such a problem where the modifying of people's claims and desires is managed as a process not of whittling them down to some compromise but of seeking for them new conditions and expressions of maturer levels of satisfaction.[51]

Lasker, too, recognized both these aims of discussion. He considered both at some length, though he admitted that "discussion procedures" had received their greatest development from those who sought chiefly the educational aim. Though he found a widespread use of discussion in farm organizations, among the social workers, and in industry, he admitted:

> The action group differs from the study group in that its aim permits of no delays in the reshaping of attitudes and desires. The democratic movement, the world over, has suffered from the impatience--an understandable and forgivable impatience--of those who want to get results.[52]

Though Elliott, too, was an educator, not only in his own work at Union Seminary, but also in conferences in the United States and abroad, he always viewed discussion in the political context of the nation. Echoing the sentiments of Miss Follett, he discussed "a methodology for democracy" in the first chapter of The Process of Group

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[51]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "Discussion, Lecture-Forum, and Debate," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVIII (November, 1932), 517-531.

[52]Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, p. 45.

Thinking. He emphasized that the leaders of genuine democracy must constantly keep the people thinking, considering issues, cooperating in the creation of decisions which reflect the desires of all. The giving of mere advice or added information is not enough. The securing of participation is the crux of the problem. Indeed, Elliott went so far as to say:

> Of course, the end of every educational process is action. Experience is teaching us--slowly and painfully, it is true--that people live only by ideals that they themselves really understand, and carry out effectively only such plans as they have had a part in framing. Any attitude or point of view becomes one's own only as he has the chance to work it out.[53]

The fundamental principles of discussion were worked out before the Inquiry's decade. But the Inquirers wove the principles into a social creed which gave their work meaning and validity. Essentially, it was an amalgam of the philosophy of John Dewey and the social thought of Mary Parker Follett, blended into the religious inspiration of the Social Gospel and the confident promises of science. It emphasized the freedom of all men to participate in the direction of their affairs. It placed a strong reliance on man's natural tendency toward orderliness. It demanded that the great insights of science be translated into concrete action for the good of all men. Following the

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[53]p. 5.

lead of their intellectual predecessors, these Inquirers suggested that the study of and the use of discussion method could provide a common meeting ground. They wanted a different kind of education to arise in the process of decision-making. Their creed did not allow them to sit quietly and remain aloof. In the real world of problems and strife they met the demands they placed on themselves by creating techniques of discussion and convincing others of their efficacy. The following chapters consider their two contributions to the discussion movement: Chapter Five, their work as conference consultants; Chapter Six, their development of discussion techniques.

CHAPTER V

THE WORK OF THE INQUIRY

As a brief review of the previous analysis of the Inquiry's "publishing program" will reveal,[1] the work of this organization covered a field broader than discussion method itself. For example, one might with profit consider the work of Bruno Lasker and his colleagues in the area of relations between racial and religious groups. In a time when sociology was young, these studies may be more significant than this dissertation has tended to indicate. Or, one might evaluate the work of E. C. Lindeman, a pioneer student of the industrial and the urban communities and a leading educator among the professional social workers. The Inquiry itself may be worthy of study from a different point of view than that taken in this dissertation. It is an interesting example of a type of social organization

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[1]The Inquiry's publishing program is reviewed in detail on pp.144-151 of this dissertation.

which has played a large role in the development of the nation's social consciousness; here, as in many other cases, the enlightened philanthropists have probably made a considerable contribution. But these aspects of the Inquiry's work, though interesting and potentially significant, are beyond the limits of this, "a historical study of the discussion principles and techniques developed by the Inquiry." Certainly the most typical aspect of its work, especially during the period of maturity from 1924 through 1927, was the task of applying discussion principles and creating discussion techniques.

The determination of the outer limits of the Inquiry's work is not an easy task. In Section IV of his Report MacIver summarized "the activities of the Inquiry," stating that it had acquired a "distinctive reputation" in the preparation of conference agenda, the planning of various activities, and other consultation work.[2] In the preceding few months the staff had received invitations from the following organizations: The National Conference

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[2]Robert M. MacIver, Report on the Inquiry (mimeographed and privately circulated by the Inquiry, 1929), pp. 13 ff. As in the previous chapters, references to letters, memoranda, and reports, whether in the text or in footnotes, indicate materials in the Inquiry archives, in the possession of the author.

on Social Work, the Adult Education Association, the Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, the Jewish Social Center, the Hadassah Society, the International Conference on Mental Hygiene, the Council of Women for Home Missions, and others. Not only had the staff been active in various parts of the United States, but also "at Honolulu, at Havana, in Canada, and at various European centers, including Geneva, Budapest, Jerusalem, and Helsingfors." MacIver concluded:

> Up to the end of 1923 the members of the Inquiry had taken an active part in about a hundred conferences, mostly in association with other organizations. The conferences in question were mainly in the fields of interest of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., of adult education groups, of religious education groups, of social work organizations, and of other organizations devoted either to international or to industrial problems.[3]

He added that the Inquiry had helped to initiate conferences dealing with discussion method or leadership training at Lake Mohonk, New York; Riverside, Illinois; Asbury Park, New Jersey; and Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania. E. C. Carter usually made some attempt to present a summary of the year's work in his annual letters to Mrs. Elmhirst. On December 11, 1923 he wrote that the conference work of that year had been conducted on three levels. First, the

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[3]Ibid.

Inquiry had actively participated in twenty-three of a list of forty-four organizations, including the National Federation of Settlements, the New York League of Women Voters, the New England Association of Teachers of English, the Ohio Conference of Social Work, the National Interracial Conference, the National Y...C..., and the National Y...J.... Secondly, the Inquiry's relationship with twenty organizations had been more one of consultation; these included the Denison Manufacturing Company, the Boston Milk Wagon Drivers, the Pittsburgh Hungry Club, and the Conference on the Cause and Cure of War. Thirdly, in three organizations, the National Federation of Women's Clubs, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and the Pan American Conference at Havana, the Inquiry staff had functioned only as observers. Since 1922 was probably the busiest one for the organization, this letter reveals the fullest scope of Inquiry activities.

This chapter on "the work of the Inquiry" presents a representative sample of the conferences and other activities wherein the Inquiry played its characteristic role of consultation and training director. It includes a description of the three "conferences on conference," the Helsingfors Conference of the Y...C..., the early conferences of the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Baltimore

Conference on American Relations with China, and the Columbia course in discussion leadership. It concludes with a brief precis of the MacIver Report, probably the most complete and accurate presentation of the work of the Inquiry.

The three "conferences on conference"

As the list of conferences where the Inquiry participated lengthened in early 1925, the staff saw more clearly that they would themselves never have to sponsor a national meeting, or even a regional interim meeting, to carry out the desired experiments in discussion method. The National Conference on the Christian Way of Life had become a process rather than a single event. A series of meetings where the method itself would be put under group scrutiny was regarded as the best opportunity for controlled investigation. Typically, the Inquiry claimed no chief part in the planning. At the February 13, 1925 meeting of the International Relations Commission Carter reported that the newly appointed executive secretary of the Methodist Church's foreign mission program, the Rev. W. E. Diffendorfer, had taken the initiative and called a preliminary meeting to plan for a spring institute on conference method.[4] The

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[4] Minutes of the International Relations Commission meeting, February 13, 1925.

arrangements and the preliminary studies for this first and the following two "conferences on conference" were made by an ad hoc committee appointed at Diffendorfer sponsored planning sessions, Carter described the Inquiry's participation in a brief paragraph, part of his annual letter to Mrs. Elmhirst, December 14, 1926:

> For each conference, the Inquiry has provided the chairman of the Program Committee. Its staff has assisted in the process of basing the program of each session on an advance study of the desires of those in attendance. It has undertaken the responsibility of preparing and circulating the report of each of the conferences. The most recent conference, that held at Pocono Manor, has asked the Inquiry to become the organizing center for a series of experiments affecting the summer programs of institutes attended by upwards of two hundred and fifty thousand delegates.

Carter went on to point out that, although their own summaries did not reveal it, these conference planners and leaders were actually concerned with three questions:

1. Is what we are trying to teach in these conferences really being learned by the delegates?
2. Is what we are trying to teach really worth teaching?
3. How may conference and organization programs be so altered that the delegates attending these conferences and summer schools may be most fully enlisted in the task of learning from experience?

The second issue of the Occasional Papers, April, 1925, announced the first Asbury Park Conference. It stated that the chief topic for consideration would be the two most pressing needs in the summer conference programs of a

number of national organizations: the preparation of suitable study materials and the training of discussion leaders. The participants had been asked to work before they came to the meeting. The program committee had sent out three questionnaires designed to determine the effectiveness of pre-conference preparation and the real needs of those attending concerning the subject at hand, conference method itself. The June, 1925 issue of the Papers reported that 125 registered delegates had attended, "most of them officials with large responsibilities" in such organizations as the Missionary Education Movement, various Sunday School associations, the Student Volunteer Movement, the Christian Associations, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, and the Inquiry. The four and half days were divided into twelve sessions, designed to analyze the nature of the summer conference and at the same time to make the delegates aware of the discussion process which the group followed in its analysis. As the **Papers** described it:

> . . . as the discussion proceeded from topic to topic, and from "laying out a situation" to "discovery of the real problems" and hence to suggestions of "ways out," it was the common experience and thinking of the group that provided the resources, not the contributions of outstanding individuals. . . . In actuality, and this was a surprise to many, there is far more information, and skill in meeting a problem, in the possession of average

> people than is usually supposed; only it requires the special stimulus of the back and forth of disciplined, progressive argument to bring it out.[5]

Careful scrutiny usually revealed that any controversial problem would yield to group analysis, that the choice was seldom an absolute one between good and evil, that any large problem is usually a series of related smaller problems. At the end of this Asbury Park Conference a number of important questions were left unexamined, and the delegates insisted that another conference on conference be held the following year.

About fifty leaders of conferences, assemblies, and summer institutes met for the second Asbury Park Conference on Conference on May 6-9, 1926. Professor Elliott, who had played a key role in the first of the series, served as chairman. Dr. William Heard Kilpatrick, of the Teachers College, served as "consultant on educational method." He spoke at some length on six "laws of learning." Considerable discussion interrupted and followed his talk, and the further sessions of the conference were devoted to an analysis of the summer conference as an educational enterprise. The discussions centered around three key problems:

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[5]"Asbury Park," Occasional Papers, June, 1925.

1. From what kinds of life situations do the delegates come with expectations (on their own and their leader's part) that the conference will give help?
2. What is the conference expected to contribute to the needs thus disclosed?
3. By what measures of set-up and procedure does the conference seek to make its contributions effective?[6]

Six of the sessions were devoted to a cooperative job analysis of the leader's function. In their analysis of the personnel of summer gatherings the conferees recognized three types of participants: the socially purposeful delegate, the personally perplexed delegate, and the holiday-minded delegate. The group decided that the delegates could be arranged along a continuum or interest scale, ranging from the holiday-minded to the purposeful. In addition to problems of leadership and personnel, the conference considered the types of meeting place, the place of the subject-matter expert, the means of program-evaluation, and other related problems. They listed six specific conference aims:

1. To give the delegates a concentrated and controlled experience of right living.
2. To create a profit-inviting mood and method of discussion.
3. To widen the delegates' outlook on social experience.
4. To develop certain specific understandings and skills, especially for leadership in carrying out the programs of home organizations.
5. To inspire revaluations of life purposes.

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[5] "The Second Asbury Park Conference," Occasional Papers, July-August, 1926.

6. To assist delegates in reaching decisions as to their life work.[7]

The Third Conference on Conference was held in a somewhat different locale, Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania, November 3-7, 1926. In size and format it was quite similar to the first two.

The Helsingfors Conference of the Y.M.C.A.

The Nineteenth World Conference of the Y.M.C.A., which met in Helsingfors, Finland, August 1-6, 1926 was preceded by a long and carefully planned program of study. The Association had not had a world-wide meeting since 1913 in Edinburgh. As early as 1921 the World's Committee, under the heavy influence of post-war dispair, authorized a new and thorough consideration of the relation of the Association to industrial, racial, and international problems. In 1924, beginning to plan for the Conference itself, the Committee set in motion a comprehensive attempt to determine just what youth were thinking about the world's problems; the results of questionnaires sent out in twenty-two languages were correlated into study books, one of them published by the Inquiry, Discussion Outlines to Help Prepare for the World's Y.M.C.A. Conference.[8] Some thirty-six of the forty-

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Published by the Inquiry in 1925.

six attending nations participated in this enterprise, which came to be known as "the Helsingfors Inquiry." The actual selection of delegates was begun a full year before the conference date, and they were encouraged to spend the intervening time in careful study of the preparatory material, using the method of group discussion. The Conference study-book, Youth and the Christian Way of Life in a Changing World,[9] was prepared by a meeting of some seventy leaders representing twenty countries after careful review of preliminary national reports. In June, 1926 the 1500 delegates were assigned to fifty international groups of thirty each, each group to be led by a team of three, representing three nationalities and at least two of the official languages of the Conference, English, French, and German. The long program of preparation was climaxed at Helsingfors the week before the Conference opened, when the fifty teams of leaders were given four days of special training in group leadership.[10]

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[9] Geneva, Switzerland: World's Committee Y.M.C.A., 1926.

[10] "Helsingfors, a Step toward International Understanding," Occasional Papers, November, 1926.

The members of the World's Committee had decided at its Budapest meeting in 1925 that their own organization and procedure had to be democratic before they could sincerely preach democracy to others, and they had begun practicing discussion techniques there. The official record of the Conference describes three experiments which were unique in the history of the Y.M.C.A. movement, each designed to augment in some way this democratization. The first was the calculated effort to base the deliberations on the attitudes of youth. The second was the invitation to older boys (ages 17 to 21), 231 of them from 26 nations, to attend as official delegates. Many of them had of course participated in the careful study which preceded the world meeting. The third experiment was the programming of the entire conference around the meetings of the fifty discussion groups; every delegate had numerous opportunities to participate.[11] Attendance at these group meetings averaged eighty per cent. The discussions, centered around "home and sex, vocation and business, national, international and race problems,"[12] topics chosen by the youth themselves during

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[11] Youth Faces Life, (Geneva, Switzerland: World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., 1926), pp. 2-3.

[12] Ibid., p. 43.

the months of preparation. Every afternoon at 4:30 the 150 leaders met to prepare a summary of the day's discussions. It was mimeographed and distributed late in the evening. At the evening sessions of the entire conference, one speaker in each language spent ten minutes giving an oral report on the progress made that day. Contrary to usual Y.M.C.A. custom, the Conference did not produce a final list of recommendations, but the official record contained the final reports of a number of national groups. Evidently the meeting did have considerable impact on many of the delegates. The Occasional Papers, January, 1927 indicated that associations in Scotland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Poland were using group discussion in their national meetings.

Dr. John R. Mott became president of the World's Committee at the Helsingfors Conference. In a letter to Galen Fisher, chairman of the Inquiry's Executive Committee, he indicated his evaluation of the Inquiry's contribution:

> I wish through you to express to the members of the Executive Committee of the Inquiry my profound appreciation, which I know is shared by my colleagues on the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., for the large contribution which the Inquiry have made toward making possible the remarkable success of the recent World's Conference of the Y.M.C.A. I refer in particular to the preparatory processes in connection with the Helsingfors Inquiry and also to the discussion groups at the Conference itself. The expert guidance and able

> leadership brought to bear upon these processes and on the related activities had more to do, under God, with ensuring the recognized effectiveness and fruitfulness of all that was done than any other factor. I do not think I exaggerate when I state that if the processes initiated in this way during the past two years are followed through that the outcome will be nothing short of a remaking of the Y.M.C.A. in many parts of the world. If you could have heard the many comments which came to my attention regarding the part played by Ned Carter, Professor Elliott, Ewing, Silcox, and Keeny, not to mention others, for whose invaluable collaboration we are so largely indebted to the Inquiry, you and those associated with you would, I feel confident, regard this as one of the most productive pieces of work thus far accomplished by your group.[13]

Including this letter in his annual letter to William Graves, Carter went on to point that at Helsingfors, as in so many other cases, the Inquiry's influence came through contact with a few strategically placed leaders in an organization. Carter himself had been the English-speaking delegate chosen to describe the discussion process at the very beginning of the Conference. Professor Elliott had played a key role in the leadership training; he had been particularly effective at the blackboard when the 150 leaders met each afternoon to summarize their discussions. C. E. Silcox had been instrumental in preparing the Inquiry's first draft of discussion outlines for "the Helsingfors Inquiry"; in December, 1925 he had sailed to Geneva, as an

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[13] Quoted by E. C. Carter in his letter to William Graves, January 26, 1927.

employee of the Inquiry, to aid in the final conference planning.[14] The various Inquiry members, including C. H. Tobias, who made one of the significant evening speeches, were the nucleus of trained discussion leaders.

The Institute of Pacific Relations

Like so many important organizations and programs, the Institute of Pacific Relations grew out of the Y.M.C.A. The official record of the first conference, 1925, discusses three stages in the development of the plans for the Institute.[15] The Honolulu Y.M.C.A. considered a conference for delegates from the countries bordering on the Pacific Ocean as early as 1921. After Dr. John R. Mott gave his official encouragement, plans began to move rapidly ahead. The enthusiastic response to the proposed conference led to a broadening of its base and personnel; now the "Conference on the Problems of the Pacific Peoples" was to include a number of those outside the Association membership. A General Calling Committee met in Atlantic City, New Jersey, September, 1924, and issued a comprehensive statement

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[14] Minutes of the Administration Committee, December 22, 1925.

[15] Institute of Pacific Relations, Honolulu Session, 1925 (Honolulu: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1925), pp. 7 ff.

describing the conference. Galen Fisher and E. C. Carter were among those who represented the United States. At that meeting "round tables" were made the central feature of the program; forums and addresses were to supplement the group discussions. Fisher and Carter also attended the Yale Club meeting, February 22, 1925, along with James T. Shotwell and T. [illegible] Davert, where the beginning organization of the American Council of the Institute was formed. Carter was elected Secretary of the American Council. As the plans for the Conference began to mature, the Central Executive Committee in Hawaii decided to again broaden the base of participation and to abandon the [illegible] sponsorship. "The Conference on the Problems of the Pacific Peoples" became "The Institute of Pacific Relations," a self-governing and self-supported organization for research and consultation in its area of concern. Many [illegible] persons continued to participate as individuals. Charles Fahs was the only Inquirer who actually attended this first convention.

When the Institute met June 30-July 14, one hundred eleven active participants attended, from Australia, Canada, China, Continental United States, Japan, Korea, Philippines, New Zealand, and Hawaii. Forty associate members, mostly Americans, attended as observers. All meetings were held on the campus of Punahou School. The membership was divided

into four round table discussion groups which met to consider problems chosen by the program committee from day to day. Full and frank discussion resulted, for no one represented his country or an official point of view. Among the subjects were:

--the effect on Japanese thought of the American Exclusion Act
--the treatment of resident aliens in various Pacific countries
--the nation-wide agitation in China against the "unequal" treaties, extra-territoriality, and foreign customs control
--the industrial revolution in the Far West
--economic imperialism in the Orient as evidenced in foreign concessions, spheres of influence, and alien exploitation of natural resources
--the tension growing out of the great discrepancy in standards of living around the world[16]

The results of the round tables were examined and evaluated in forum sessions of the whole membership. Most of the forum and group meetings were closed to the public. Many sessions, however, featured speeches and lectures by the experts in attendance; these were open to anyone wishing to attend. The lecture topics were of course directly related to the subjects under discussion. There were no final resolutions or decisions for action. It was suggested that in their own individual ways the members would carry

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[16]"The Institute of Pacific Relations," Occasional Papers, September, 1925.

out the suggestions of the conference.

This pattern was generally followed in the succeeding biennial Institute Conferences. There were some minor shifts from time to time. When 214 attended the Kyoto Conference in 1929, the four round tables were too large for effective discussion, and the size of the conference was reduced to 132 for the Shanghai Conference in 1931.[17] In the conferences that followed Honolulu 1927 the preparation and planning were much more effective and thorough. There had been little attempt to provide "data papers" for the first conference in 1925, and the members felt that the preparation for the 1927 conference was hasty and inadequate. But as the research activities broadened, the period of preparation for each conference was, in effect, the two years which preceded it. Through the years the Institute published a host of competent studies and prime research volumes on the various facets of life in the Pacific area. Publicity continued to be a key problem, for the members wanted to make the group discussions immune from public pressures; yet they also were keenly aware of the immense value in the newspaper

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[17] Beginning in 1927 the biennial conferences of the Institute of Pacific Relations were reported in a large volume titled Problems of the Pacific, and dated with the date of the particular conference. These volumes were published by the University of Chicago Press.

coverage of the various conferences. Hence at the 1927 Conference the Pacific Council, the international governing body of the Institute, decided that each group should appoint a secretary who would report to the publicity committee any newsworthy comments which should be released to the press. The lecture sessions were, of course, always open to the press.

Probably the largest contribution of the Inquiry to the Institute of Pacific Relations came at the Conference in 1927 when a number of Inquirers attended: E. C. Carter, Miss Mabel Gratty, Herbert Croly, Malen A. Fisher, William H. Kilpatrick, and James T. Shotwell. As Carter pointed out in his letter to Mrs. Elmhirst, November 23, 1927, he served during the Conference as secretary for the Program Committee and Professor Kilpatrick served as its educational advisor. He went on to point out that he, Shotwell, and Kilpatrick were playing key roles in the American Council of the Institute. Before the conference the Inquiry had given considerable assistance in program preparation and research, particularly Lasker, Sheffield, Keeny, and Dr. Goodwin B. Watson. Dr. Kilpatrick's paper on "The Management of Group Discussion" was included in the official

record of the Conference.[13] The record included also a long article by Herbert Croly, "The Human Potential in Pacific Politics," reprinted from The New Republic.

The office at 129 East 52nd Street served as the center of American Council activity from the beginning. As the Inquiry's program diminished and the Institute's program increased, the Institute took over more and more of the facilities. This office eventually became the center of the Institute's international activities as well. As Carter pointed out in a letter to MacIver on May 16, 1925, the Inquiry's concern for international affairs found its best expression in the Institute of Pacific Relations. Carter himself became a key person in the international Institute and remained there until his retirement in 1946.

The Baltimore Conference

In early 1925 increasing civil strife in China and mounting antagonism against foreign control made it more and more evident that American policy would have to be modified. A group of about fifty people met in New York on July 17 to begin to lay plans for a conference on American relations with China. An ad hoc committee which included Inquiry staff members was set up to provide the

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[13] This paper was also published in the December, 1927 issue of the Occasional Papers.

necessary organization. The "Conference on American Relations with China" met at Johns Hopkins University on September 17th through the 20th. The membership invitations, sent out to more than two hundred persons, stated pointedly that the meeting was unofficial. It said;

> Practically all those present will be competent to contribute something distinctive and valuable to the discussions. On this basis, it is clear that the sessions will consist less of formal addresses than of an exchange of information and points of view, to the end of finding out what results in action ought to be sought by organizations or individuals in promoting fuller information in the United States regarding China, and for furthering fuller information in the United States regarding China, and for furthering cooperative relations between the American and Chinese peoples.[19]

The two hundred participants included missionaries, business men, diplomats, economic advisers, college professors, physicians, and a number who had lived or who were living in China. The Chinese group included the Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. The planners intended that there should be free and full discussion. There were no official resolutions, but the conference did agree that the report of the first sectional group represented the substance of the commonly held views. The group had recommended that

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[19] American Relations with China (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1926), p. 7.

the Western nations abolish extraterritoriality in China and grant her customs autonomy. Interestingly enough, the official Chinese Customs Conference which opened in Peking a month after the Baltimore meeting agreed to customs autonomy before the Baltimore conference report was published.[20]

In summarizing Inquiry participation in the Baltimore conference for Julius Rosenwald, Carter wrote to William Graves, October 3, 1925:

> In the preparation, execution and follow-up of this conference the entire staff of the Inquiry, and many of its commission members, have devoted several weeks of time in addition to the activities of the Inquiry's International Commission because it became apparent that certain of the functions of a National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, not only with reference to international, but also with reference to racial and industrial matters, could be performed if the Inquiry was able to meet the challenge of the current crisis in China to stage a citizens' conference regarding a current international issue in which economic, cultural, religious, political, and social factors entered.
>
> I want to make it quite clear to you that the conference was in no sense run by, or under the auspices of, the Inquiry. At the same time, the Inquiry put practically its entire resources at the disposal of an ad hoc committee for a period of nearly two months and is continuing in a major relationship to the completing of the work of the conference. By the creation of an ad hoc committee, it was possible for the Inquiry to make as large a contribution to the method and program of the conference as if it had been directly under its own auspices and at the same time secure a far larger

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[20] Ibid., p. 31.

> degree of personal and organizational cooperation than would have been possible under merely Inquiry auspices.

The "committee of sponsors" had included Carter and C. H. Fahs of the staff, Galen M. Fisher, Executive Committee Chairman, Douglas L. Elliman, Treasurer, Herbert Croly, C. M. Cavert, and other associates of the Inquiry. The staff had prepared a series of Data Reports which were sent to the delegates before the conference opened. Background information was sent to the seven hundred largest newspapers in the country.[21] The Inquiry accepted the responsibility for preparing the volume of proceedings and results, with C. H. Fahs serving as editor. The expense of the conference was borne by a number of private individuals, including John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Charles R. Crane, both heavy contributors to the Inquiry's finances.

In a careful memorandum of criticism, written not long after the Baltimore conference, Sheffield suggested to Carter that there were good and bad features in the conference. He listed five "features which give me satisfaction": the quality and importance of the speeches, the merging of attitudes among the different interest groups, "the progressive qualifying of the issues," the demonstration

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[21] E. C. Carter letter to William Graves, October 3, 1925.

for China of an aroused American conscience, the new links established between the Inquiry and various interest groups. Sheffield felt, however, that considerable time had been wasted in confused and contentious debating, especially during the meetings of the whole membership. He suggested that too little time was allotted for participation of all members in small group deliberations. The day to day planning had been confusing and inadequate. The program committee should have done a better job of foreseeing the inevitable problems and of projecting the interest areas of the day-to-day discussions. It should have been organized on a more functional basis. Lastly, in conferences such as this one, all members should clearly perceive that the aim is understanding rather than resolutions. The impact of the conferences should come from the considered action of individuals and groups when they return to their business and professional lives.[22]

The Columbia course in discussion leadership

From the early days of the organization, Inquiry leaders had been acutely aware of the lack of trained

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[22] An undated memorandum from A. D. Sheffield to E. C. Carter in the Inquiry archives.

discussion leaders. One of the difficulties at Helsingfors was the preponderance of English-speaking members in the leadership group; extensive efforts were made, both before and during the Conference, to train the necessary leaders. The Conferences on Conference were to consider especially the problem of leadership training. But the staff realized that these piecemeal efforts could not supply the need. The Executive Committee minutes of November 13, 1924 include this significant comment:

> . . . Professor Elliott raised the question as to whether the method which the Inquiry and other organizations are sponsoring was not becoming popularized more rapidly than leaders were being trained. It was agreed that an informal conference on this problem including a discussion of the technique of chairmanship and the training of discussion leaders was desirable at an early date.

About a year later the Administration Committee voted the chairman authority to appoint a group to work out plans for "the systematic training of discussion leaders."[23] Thus one of the chief projects of 1926 became the development of a three-semester-hour course, offered in the Extension Division of Columbia University February 2 to May 21, 1927, titled "Social Science S106--Discussion Leadership." Fortunately,

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[23] Mimeographed minutes of the Administration Committee meeting, December 22, 1925.

there are rather detailed records on this course available for study.[24]

The small announcement folder for the Columbia course included the following "general information":

> This course is offered through University Extension in cooperation with the Inquiry to provide an opportunity for those who wish to equip themselves for leadership of group meetings, classes, committees, conferences, and assemblies conducted on a discussion basis. It is designed, also, to meet a demand from various organizations for the specially prepared leadership by which a democratic educational process can realize both an enriching experience for their members and socially effective action for their groups. The course may be counted for graduate credit in Teachers College.

It described the course as follows:

> This course examines discussion as a process for securing full and intelligent participation by members of a social group in exploring situations which call for action. It considers the conditions and underlying theory of effective functioning in such organized groups. In addition to the weekly session of the class, every student is expected to take responsibility for field work in connection with one or more local groups. The Inquiry, in cooperation with interested organizations, will assist students in finding such opportunities in the field of their special concerns. Those who are interested in similar types of groups will meet together for conferences and consultation on their special problems.

The folder listed as Instructor: "Harrison S. Elliott, B.D., M.A., Director, Department of Religious Education

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[24]In addition to the official record of the course, published by the Inquiry in 1929 as Training for Group Experience, the archives include a complete notebook on the course prepared by Miss Rhoda McCulloch, who served as one of the "field work consultants."

Please post

Columbia University in the City of New York

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND THE INQUIRY

DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP

SPRING SESSION

February 2 to May 21, 1927

61

GENERAL INFORMATION

This course is offered through University Extension in cooperation with The Inquiry to provide an opportunity for those who wish to equip themselves for leadership of group meetings, classes, committees, conferences, and assemblies conducted on a discussion basis. It is designed, also, to meet a demand from various organizations for the specially prepared leadership by which a democratic educational process can realize both an enriching experience for their members and socially effective action for their groups. The course may be counted for graduate credit in Teachers College.

Social Science e106—Discussion Leadership. Credit II. 3 points Spring Session. Fee $30.

4:10—6:00 p.m., Thursday. Room 401 Fayerweather.

This course examines discussion as a process for securing full and intelligent participation by members of a social group in exploring situations which call for action. It considers the conditions and underlying theory of effective functioning in such organized groups. In addition to the weekly session of the class, every student is expected to take responsibility for field work in connection with one or more local groups. The Inquiry, in cooperation with interested organizations, will assist students in finding such opportunities in the field of their special concerns. Those who are interested in similar types of groups will meet together for conference and consultation on their special problems.

REGISTRATION

This course is open to those who have had some experience with the conduct of groups. Students are asked to consult with Professor Elliott, 3041 Broadway, New York City (Telephone, Morningside 6100), or one of the consultant staff at The Inquiry office, 129 East 52nd Street, New York City (Telephone, Plaza 4700), before registering.

The course is conducted on a graduate basis but, on approval of the instructor, is open to those without college degrees who are qualified for the work by special experience.

Students should register at the office of the Registrar, Room 315 University Hall, Columbia University. Registration for the Spring Session begins on Thursday, January 27, and closes, for those desiring credit, on Saturday, February 12.

The fee of $30 and, in addition, the University fee of $6, should be paid at the office of the Bursar, Room 310 University Hall.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More detailed information about the course can be secured from the office of University Extension, Columbia University, or from The Inquiry, 129 East 52nd Street, New York City.

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, LL.D. (Columbia), D.Litt. (Oxon.), Hon. D. (Paris)
President of the University

JAMES CHRYSTIE EGBERT, Ph.D., LL.D.
Professor of Latin
Director of University Extension and the School of Business

INSTRUCTOR

HARRISON S. ELLIOTT, B.D., M.A.
Director, Department of Religious Education and Psychology, Union Theological Seminary

DIRECTOR OF FIELD WORK

GRACE COYLE, A.B.
Instructor, New School of Social Research
Member, The Inquiry Staff

FIELD WORK CONSULTANTS

EDWARD C. CARTER, A.B.
RHODA MCCULLOCH, A.B.
ALFRED DWIGHT SHEFFIELD, A.M.
Members of The Inquiry Staff

Fig. 1.--Announcement folder, the Columbia course.

and Psychology, Union Theological Seminary." The Director of Field Work was Grace Coyle of the New School of Social Research and a member of the Inquiry staff. The three Field Work Consultants were: Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Miss Rhoda McCulloch, and E. C. Carter. The January, 1927 issue of the Occasional Papers included an announcement similar to this small folder.

Sixty-eight students registered for the course, representing a host of different organizations, including: the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the American Country Life Association, the Federal Council of Churches, the Girl Scouts, the Recksher Foundation, the International Council of Religious Education, the Missionary Education Movement, the National Board of the Y...C..., the National Council of the Y...C..., the National League of Women Voters. Most of the students were officials in these or similar organizations. Professor Elliott devoted the fourteen two-hour sessions every Thursday to lecture and class consideration of the background and theory material. He gave detailed suggestions about the problems a discussion leader encounters. Members of the class were asked to participate in demonstration discussions on various timely topics. Elliott published much of the substantive material of these

sessions not long afterwards in his Process of Group Thinking.[25] The students were divided into six sub-groups centering around subjects of common concern: clubs, conferences, committees and boards, religious education, family relations, and international relations. These smaller groups met weekly with one of the staff for special problems involved in their own spheres of interest. They were urged to apply the theories to their own lives and work. The staff met regularly to consider future assignments and the functioning of the sub-group discussions; Professor Elliott seems to have carried the chief burden for the two-hour weekly sessions.

Elliott and his associates of the Inquiry staff intended this course to be a model for university courses in discussions. Sheffield wrote in the preface of his "record" of the course:

> A class of this sort is itself a distinctive group experience, and affords a variety of striking educative episodes. The present booklet, however, confines itself to a summary of the distinctive features of content in such a course. This is what the Inquiry has found, by correspondence and consultations with educators and organizational heads, to be immediately desired by university departments of education and social science

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[25] Harrison S. Elliott, The Process of Group Thinking (New York: Association Press, 1928).

in making their plans for such an offering.[26]

When Carter reported plans for the course to Mrs. Elmhirst, he indicated just what the Inquiry hoped to achieve. He said:

> If the course in group leadership which the Inquiry is sponsoring at Columbia during the next summer becomes a regular course at Columbia and, as a result, similar courses are given at other universities, whatever the Inquiry will have been able to transfer to the activities of national organizations will receive substantial reinforcement from the universities.[27]

In his Foreword to Sheffield's report, John Dewey welcomed the volume as another pioneer undertaking which opened and explored new territory. He felt that the Inquiry was making a significant contribution with its studies of the methods of democratic action.

The MacIver Report

Robert M. MacIver's Report on the Inquiry is, at one and the same time, an account of the work of the Inquiry from 1922 to 1928 and an illustration of the open-minded search for the truth which the Inquiry liked to sponsor.

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[26] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, recorder, Training for Group Experience (New York: The Inquiry, 1929), p. vi.

[27] E. C. Carter's annual letter to Mrs. Leonard Elmhirst, December 14, 1926.

From the beginning it had considered itself a temporary organization, ever-willing to subject itself to the same scrutiny it gave to other organizations. Twice, at the end of 1923 and 1926, the Inquirers devoted themselves to considerable self-evaluation before deciding to continue the organization for a three-year period. Hence it was somewhat in the scheme of things that the year 1929 should include a thorough-going re-study of their achievements and raison d'etre. The Administration Committee decided at its December 21, 1928 meeting to ask Dr. MacIver, sociologist at Columbia University, to do a complete study and evaluation of the Inquiry.[23] On January 4 Carter invited MacIver to spend about half-time for a period of three months on the appraisal. He accepted and wrote to Carter on January 7:

> As I understand it, my task is to study the work carried on by the Inquiry since its initiation, including the trends which have developed within it; to consider the influence on other organizations and the significance of its principles for the community as a whole; to seek for criteria by which to assess the standards and methods for which it stands; and accordingly to suggest means whereby the emergent values, social and educational, may be conserved and advanced, whether through the further agency of the Inquiry itself or otherwise.

Actually the study took a month longer than anticipated, for it was delivered to Carter on May 27, a document of some

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[23] H. C. Carter letter to "Friends of the Inquiry," May 27, 1929.

fifty pages mimeographed. In early June the document itself was sent out to a select list of "Friends of the Inquiry." Much of the September-October issue of the Occasional Papers was devoted to a detailed summary of the report; it included the characteristic invitation to send in a response. Of course many who had been an important part of the movement sent in critiques to the office.

MacIver's investigation was thorough and careful. His first task was the preparation of a small questionnaire which was printed, inserted in the February Occasional Papers, and sent out to 3800 persons. It was later sent to a number of others who had purchased Inquiry publications. In his Report MacIver explained that he had deliberately set up the questionnaire to demand that the respondents be familiar with the Inquiry's work and interested in its evaluation.[29] Three hundred fifty people responded; 334 replies were received in time to be included in the tabulations. MacIver was also given complete freedom to examine the publications and archives of the organization. He interviewed the members of the staff and a list of thirty-two persons who had been affiliated with the Inquiry in some

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[29] MacIver, Report, p. 3.

way. He commented especially that all those he had contacted had been cordial and cooperative. He based his analysis on the replies to the questionnaires, on his study of the published work of the Inquiry and the contents of its archives, and on consultations with the various members and former members of the staff.

The contents of MacIver's Report can best be presented by an analytical table of contents, prepared to show the highlights:

I. Character of the Investigation. The task an unusual one. An evaluation and a basis for future operation. Recommendations must be based on imponderables.

II. Data and Procedure. Access to all records and publications. Interviews with key staff and associates. More than 3300 questionnaires sent out, 334 replies tabulated. The grounds for evaluation. This organization in a society already well supplied with organizations.

III. The Objective of the Inquiry. Transition from the original objective. Method alone or method in relation to a goal. The nature of Inquiry method. The social creed of the Inquiry. The need for more thorough experimentation. Method versus technique.

IV. The Activities of the Inquiry. A) An active part in about a hundred conferences. Personal affiliations with staff in various organizations. Initiation and stimulation of study groups. The study of religious differences. B) Publications resulting from conference and study group activities. A list of 73 publications through 1928. The books on conference method. The Occasional Papers. The practice of anonymity.

V. Importance of the objective. The degree of significance as important as the degree of achievement. The scientific importance of the small group. The principle of responsible participation.

VI. Influence of the Inquiry. A) Process of penetration within other organizations. The Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. The Institute of Pacific Relations. Temporary, occasional, and casual contacts. A selective group of religious organizations. A considerable group of social agencies. B) Presentation of its methods through direct contact and publications. The affiliation of questionnaire respondents. Distribution of respondents by states. Urban-rural distribution of respondents. 228 replied that the Inquiry had been an aid and stimulus to their thinking. The failure to reach certain educational circles. The limited appeal of its literary contributions.

VII. Summary and Recommendations. Other organizations might take over the unfinished task. The strong case for continuing the Inquiry. Ten recommendations regarding a still unfulfilled portion of the Inquiry's projects. The uncertainty expressed by many as to the present scope and objective of the Inquiry. Three recommendations regarding the development of a consultative relation between the Inquiry and other workers within its field. The completion of the Inquiry's experiment in adult education. Continuation as a temporary organization. A two to three year period for concluding its task. Four recommendations regarding the period of time requisite for the completion of the task and the arrangements for its continuance and conclusion.

VIII. Concluding Remarks. The attempt to improve the "inner machinery" of society. The investigation of the potentialities of group thinking towards the realization of a broad social creed.

Appendix I. A list of 32 persons interviewed for this report by the author.

Appendix II. The questionnaire. The questions and an analysis of the answers.

MacIver felt that the Inquiry should continue for a period of two to three years, devoting its program to a completion to its unfulfilled tasks. He urged that the first task should be a comprehensive study of the methods of discussion

and conference. Further projects should be undertaken only inasmuch as they contributed to this chief aim. This program should result in several volumes regarding the philosophical rationale, the theoretical bases, and the practical methods of "group thinking." He concluded:

> How to live together so that our differences shall as far as possible promote instead of hindering our living --here is a supreme task toward solving which science and art, philosophy and practice, experience and faith must proceed hand in hand. The Inquiry has a distinctive place among social organizations because it has been particularly conscious of this task and particularly anxious, in a special experimental way, to face it. In viewing what it has achieved, we found the need for a further concentration on this task, the need on the one hand for a fuller assertion of the unity of its endeavor and the need on the other for a fuller explanation of the results attained in terms of the methods which it advocates. The writer believes that a follow-up along these lines is a necessary completion of the Inquiry's experiment, and that it is one which highly deserves the support of all who are conscious of the fundamental questions of our contemporary social life.[30]

The MacIver Report became the central document in an extensive process of evaluation, which covered most of 1929 and early 1930. In an issue devoted to the Inquiry's "self-study" the Occasional Papers revealed that there had been two important meetings of the staff and various associ-

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[30] Ibid., p. 45.

ates and advisors in June.[31] An "advisory group" had met June 21-22 to consider the Report, the responses to it, and the future of the Inquiry. The Administration Committee met at the Hotel Belmont on June 28. Present were: Galen Fisher, William H. Kilpatrick, Miss Rhoda McCulloch, Miss Henrietta Roelofs, S. C. Carter, Miss Nan Y. Hewitt, and S. A. Keeny. This group had before it a fat catalogue composed of the Report and a summary of all the responses to it. The Committee decided at this meeting to end the old Inquiry on or about December 31 and to transfer to a New Inquiry all its material assets and good will. This new organization was to continue for a period of as much as seven to ten years (though only three had been recommended), devoting itself to the task set for it by MacIver, a study of "social education in an age of change." A liquidation committee composed of Carter, Elliman, and Fisher was instructed to carry out the decisions of the Administration Committee. Carter was asked to take the initiative in forming the new organization.

The MacIver Report signalled the end of the Inquiry's effective work, for these pioneer discussion experts never again functioned as a team in conference planning and leader-

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[31]September-October, 1929.

ship. But they had done their work well, for the discussion method was now known far and wide. In a sense the Inquiry's influence extended from Honolulu to Helsingfors and around the world, for those who attended these new-style conferences frequently caught the Inquiry spirit and returned home to spread the use of discussion method. The Inquiry had usually preferred to remain in the background, but wherever the conference procedure revolved around discussion groups during their decade, the guidance of experienced hands was obvious. Carter, Miss McCulloch, Elliott, Sheffield, Lasker, Lindeman, Kilpatrick, and their colleagues had accumulated the experience for competent guidance. They were hard-headed practical men, sensitively attuned to the immediate needs of conferences in all kinds of situations. In their years of work together they made the first study of discussion techniques. An analysis of this achievement is the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE INQUIRY'S TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUCTIONS

In a broad social movement such as that which has nurtured group discussion, it is never enough to formulate theories and to dream of the new ideal. The essential conceptual structure had been laid down when the Inquiry began its work. John Dewey particularly is responsible for opening social and educational questions to investigation by methods borrowed from the natural sciences. He is responsible, too, for a widespread "democratization" of the schools of America, both public and private. Mary Parker Follett was among the first to work out the political implications of the discussion theories. She wanted to reorient the nation in terms of the group, rather than the individual and the state. As many critics have testified, these two original thinkers share in the founding of the discussion movement.[1] They worked out the principles

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[1]Robert M. MacIver, Report on the Inquiry (Mimeographed and circulated by the Inquiry, 1929), p. 9. As in the previous chapters, all citations to reports, letters,

which we continue to teach to this day. But they were not alone, even in the making of theory. The Progressives and Woodrow Wilson brought into every part of the government a new faith in the common man; when the Inquirers set out to reach "the rank and file," they were a part of this great crusade. Here and there, even in the Inquiry's decade, a university scholar was beginning to turn all the apparatus of learning to problems of conference method. But someone had to do more than theorize and dream. As the first organization of conference experts, the Inquirers played a key role in the discussion movement. They studied the principles and concepts formulated by the founders, and they set out to carry the new message to a host of national and international organizations. In short, they translated the principles into programs of action. As a result, they were the first to turn critical attention to the various techniques which make the discussion method widely applicable.

Although no commission or person in the Inquiry ever took on the responsibility of studying discussion itself,

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and memoranda refer to materials in the Inquiry archives, in the possession of the author.

their methodological emphasis was always that of group inquiry. The Federal Council document which created the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life emphasized freedom from propaganda and an "open-minded search for the truth." All through the early years, as the National Conference became the Inquiry, the staff turned back to that document to justify its work. For example, the February 5, 1924 statement repeated this emphasis and went on to add:

> At the first meeting of the National Committee, held at Lake Mohonk, there was a long discussion as to the various types of conference which might be held. It was finally agreed that the conference desired was one which would most effectually stimulate group thinking. An effort was to be made, therefore, to stimulate discussion of chosen topics everywhere throughout the nation.[2]

This statement further clarified the "purpose" of the organization.

> The method of procedure is not that of propaganda on behalf of opinions already formulated, but rather an open-minded appeal to the facts of experience in the effort to gain new light and a larger understanding of truth. For the sake of brevity this enterprise is referred to as "The Inquiry."

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[2]This was the last of a series of statements circulated among the Inquirers during the early period as a part of the process of determining the nature of the organization.

The individual Inquirers usually repeated this same sort of statement of faith in group discussion. They wanted to bring about the participant democracy which Miss Follett had promised by turning attention to the ways of meeting. On the first page of his earliest Inquiry work, Sheffield described the emphasis:

> Leadership must always count among the forces of progress, but for society today we should look especially to discussion. Modern life is complicated by the fact that we pursue our most vital interests not as individuals but as members of organized groups. Questions of conduct, therefore, are apt to take the form not simply of what is right or wrong for one of us to do, but of what is best to do under circumstances that require cooperation with others of our group or of other groups who may not share our views. Our social ideals, therefore--such ideals as godliness, patriotism, liberty, charity, democracy--must get something more than a vague mass acceptance. They must express themselves in situations within which they involve adjustments between various group interests. To play their due part these interests must first be understood and to be understood they must be allowed to speak for themselves.[3]

This statement was repeated in later revisions of Sheffield's paper, which was finally published as A Cooperative Technique for Conflict.[4] And Sheffield continued this emphasis throughout his Inquiry years. For example, in his New

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[3]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, The Way of Group Discussion (Mimeographed and circulated by the Inquiry, 1923), p. 1.

[4]New York: The Inquiry, 1924.

Republic article "Thinking in Concert" he pointed out that the techniques of the crusader and the evangelist are not enough. He suggested that a skilled and understanding discussion leader could help people to deal with their differences in revealing and creative ways, bringing about "a new orientation among their impelling desires."[5] Elliott, like Sheffield and the others, always emphasized his great faith in "the methodology of democracy." He said:

> While democracy really involves a philosophy of life and an attitude toward people, it requires also a technique. The difficulty in securing democracy has been that more attention has been paid to defending it as a philosophy than to developing the methodology by which it could be made to function in life. If all are to participate up to the limit of their capacity in the groupings of which they are a part, they must learn how to participate. Just to postulate democratic participation, without making practical provision for it to be effectively carried out, will result either in the capture of the control of the group by an oligarchic few or in confusion which will discredit the whole theory.[6]

The opposition to debate

The Inquirers believed that they had developed a new methodology and that it was much more "democratic" than any of the old ones. Harrison Elliott saw three ways of settling disputes, an appeal to authority, a conflict in

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[5] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "Thinking in Concert," New Republic, LIV (March 14, 1928), 115-117.

[6] Harrison S. Elliott, The Process of Group Thinking (New York: Association Press, 1928), p. 1.

debate, or group thinking. To him debate forced the participants to line up on two sides of the issues, devoting their time and energy to defending themselves and attacking the opponents. "The ordinary methods of argument and debate, carried out in deliberative groups, are really a denial of true democratic process."[7] The belligerent person and the person with the ready wit have the advantage. The democratic process, on the other hand, would encourage each to participate according to his capacity, welcoming all the possible arguments, no matter how unpromising they may seem at first glance. With this concentrated attempt to prove that "group thinking is different from argument," Elliott was one of the most determined of the opponents to debate among the Inquirers. Lasker's opposition was similar to Elliott's. He pointed out early in his Democracy through Discussion:

> The distiction between a discussion and a debate is fundamental. Discussion begins by examining the situation, then surveys whatever interests are at stake, whether forcefully represented in the assembly or not, and endeavors to arrive at some method of satisfying essentially what serves best the interests of all concerned. Debate, on the other hand, starts with a clear-cut proposition, such as a legislative bill, and consists in an effort of rival factions to win over to their side--that is, for or against the proposition--

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[7] Ibid., p. 15.

as much support as possible.[8]

All through the book he frequently expressed his feeling that discussion is superior to debate. He wrote of the educators who try to consider both discussion and debate as democratic procedures, but he clearly placed himself among those who favored discussion. He said:

> Debating tends to distort the total picture of the interests at stake and the opinions formed toward a given problem situation. It tends to oversimplify issues and to substitute for a multitude of potential solutions a juxtaposition of only two selected possibilities. The very saying that "there are two sides to every question" shows how far we have departed from that purposeful study which would reveal possibilities of combination of desires in an integrative solution.[9]

In his Joining in Public Discussion[10] Alfred Dwight Sheffield expressed a strong preference for the "consensus" of "integration" which Mary Parker Follett had just described in The New State. Not long afterwards, when he wrote his "Way of Group Discussion" for the Inquiry, he said very pointedly that discussion is superior because it offers collaboration in the place of coercion. "Debate,

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[8]Bruno Lasker, Democracy through Discussion (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1949), p. 17.

[9]Ibid., p. 94.

[10]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Joining in Public Discussion (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922).

both in the schools and in public affairs, follows old traditions by which the questions are clumsily set for mere yes-or-no decisions, and the disputants meet at the mental level of primitive combat."[11] His Creative Discussion contained a longer and more systematic statement; he had obviously had a great deal of difficulty getting people to understand the difference between debate and discussion. He identified three differences: 1) Debate begins with a proposed solution. Speakers must speak for or against the proposal. A conference, on the other hand, begins with a "fresh look at the whole situation from different points of view." Each participant is encouraged to present his own convictions. 2) Since debaters must line up on two sides, the emphasis is placed on winning and avoiding losing. But in a conference there are "as many sides as there are desires at stake." The emphasis is on solutions, and the one finally created should reflect the experience which produced it. 3) Debaters are encouraged to make much use of logic, and as a result they are often contentious. A conference is likely to demand more use of psychology. Conferences deal more with reasons than with arguments. They

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[11] Sheffield, Way of Group Discussion, p. 6.

are free to present their real convictions without having to defend themselves against attack.[12]

But Sheffield was, after all, a speech teacher. He had gone to Wellesley in 1911 as a professor of rhetoric and composition, and though he was more concerned with the written than the spoken word, he knew the work being done at the time in speech. In one work he had paid tribute to Winans and Woolbert. In Creative Discussion he admitted that debate might have a legitimate place. He described it:

> Where the deliberating group is large and pressed by business--as in legislatures and conventions--it is almost driven to deal with its issues by debate. In these cases, however, the really creative thinking on the issues has first been done in small face-to-face committees. The committee, as an all-participant group, best lends itself to conference method.[13]

In a Quarterly Journal of Speech article he wrote of three different types of political expression, though he obviously cast his own vote for discussion.

> Oratory is the voice of the mass meeting. It aims to focus and make articulate "the will of the people." Debate is the mode of the forum; it aims at a winning vote. Discussion is the mode of group conference; it aims at collaborative action. As a definitive concerted performance, with expressive principles of its own, discussion is but just emerging into notice, but it so

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[12] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Creative Discussion (second edition; New York: The Inquiry, 1927), pp. 25 ff.

[13] Ibid., p. 30.

> befits the process of adjustment between organized interests that it is likely to become the characteristic form of semi-public speaking in the conduct of twentieth century affairs.[14]

He went on to say quite clearly that he did not agree with those discussion enthusiasts who promised that discussion would take the place of debate. He saw the necessity for a "showdown of choice." He still insisted, however, that "the future is with discussion." His article was designed to demonstrate how a discussion-type conference could be arranged, and he elaborated on his original differentiation of the two activities. He emphasized that discussion demands as much of a participant as debate, particularly in two respects. The thought-sequence typical of discussion demands, especially of the leader, a careful consideration of the questions at hand and the nature of the issues. And discussion calls for the maximum use of the expressive resources of the participants, in the phrasing of ideas, and in the discrimination of emotional response. In a later Quarterly Journal article he admitted that debate can do three things, even though debaters tend to be combative. "1) It brings the whole medley of data and contentions into an orderly logical scheme; 2) it draws attention to fallacies

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[14] Alfred Dwight Sheffield, "Training Speakers for Conference," Quarterly Journal of Speech, X (November, 1924), 325-331.

that beset the course of thinking; 3) it precipitates a decision."[15] Sheffield saw with some clarity the naturally complementary nature of these two decision-making processes.

The limitations of discussion

In spite of all their criticism of debate and their questioning its social efficacy, the Inquirers did recognize that the discussion method, too, had its limitations. Elliott, for example, pointed out that discussion enthusiasts had sometimes tried to use group thinking "at inappropriate times and under impossible circumstances." He suggested three obvious limitations: 1) The group must turn over to an individual the execution of its policy. 2) Crisis situations may demand strong leadership, although crises usually arise because the people have not participated in the control of their affairs. 3) Some situations are not open to discussion, for the teacher, the parent, or the leader may need to "lay down the law." When individuals must make the decisions, they should do so openly.[16] In the earlier part of Chapter Two of The Process of Group Thinking Elliott indicated other limitations and weaknesses.

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[15]Alfred Dwight Shefffield, "Discussion, Lecture-Forum, and Debate," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVIII (November, 1932), 517-531.

[16]Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, pp. 20 ff.

He recognized that an unusually able individual, placed in a group of people who are generally less able than he, will find the group a hindrance. Even for the unique individual, learning the group process is an unfamiliar and difficult task. Many people refuse to allow themselves the necessary experience, when the group can be identified only by being a part of it. Of course, there are those clever propagandists who are willing to use the group process for their own purposes, as a front behind which they can maneuver.

MacIver reported that one aspect of discussion method most often overlooked was the limitations on its usefulness. He recommended that the Inquiry spend several additional years validating and systematically criticizing the results of its experiments. As an indication of what needed to be done, relative to these limitations, he quoted two paragraphs of an article by Lindeman:

> A discussion conference cannot: a) bring new facts into existence; this is a function of scientific method and discussion is neither a substitute for nor a short-cut to science; b) adequately scrutinize, test, or verify all facts relevant to the problem under consideration; this is also a part of the scientist's function and must be conducted in an atmosphere free from hurry and separated from proposed solutions; c) wholly eliminate the influence of authoritative personalities; discussion, if it is not itself to be a new mode of authority, must take into account the subjective as well as the objective phases of experience, opinions as well as facts, and desires as well as needs; d) produce sharply-defined executive conclusions upon which all members may subsequently act. These and other results

> which are scientifically or executively derived should not be expected of discussion.
>
> Discussion can, however: a) measure fact against fact; b) bring opposing attitudes and beliefs into comparison; c) humanize experts by exposing them to social realities; d) bring science and experience into relation; e) minimize prejudice and place a premium on intelligence; f) evaluate and test programs; g) reveal conflicting drives and motives; h) dissipate merely temperamental differences; i) lead to discrimination between facts, opinions, and prejudices; j) direct research toward needed knowledge; k) suggest avenues of fresh experimentation; l) re-evaluate aim, purpose, objectives; m) create new unities; n) initiate new integrations on intellectual and emotional levels.[17]

Lindeman's cognizance of the limitations of the method is quite obvious, too, in his criticism of the Inquiry itself. Not only did he recognize that major areas of social life had been overlooked, but he warned that there were at least two "persistent imperfections" or "anomolies" in the Inquiry method: "the tendency of absoluteness of methodology," and "the danger of perpetual tentativeness."[18] He recognized clearly that some Inquirers had at times become propagandists, championing a method as the answer to all evils. He suggested that tentativeness and action are opposed, that decisions must, finally, be made.

With his background in rhetoric and his work as a

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[17] Quoted by MacIver, Report, p. 15.

[18] E. C. Lindeman, Social Education (New York: New Republic, Inc., 1933), pp. 182-183.

speech teacher, Sheffield was, of course, critical of the discussion method. In his last Quarterly Journal of Speech article he listed eleven difficulties which a leader might face in getting his group to use discussion effectively, the principal ones being the lack of suitable meeting places, the size and homogenity of the group, and the unwillingness and inability of the members to think cooperatively. He noted that there are three difficulties which arise from the nature of discussion itself: "1) it is a slow process; 2) it deals with the subject on a lower level of information and communication that that of a lecture; 3) it stirs up antagonisms in the group." He went on to insist, however, that all the disadvantages could be balanced with a number of advantages, particularly in that the information presented is more likely to become a part of the participants' operational knowledge.[1] He had earlier suggested other limitations. In Creative Discussion he described the basic limitation that the group will eventually enter an area of thought where extra fact resources are needed. They may themselves provide the needed information, for example by a program of reading, or they may invite into their group experts in the various fields. In doing so, they must

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[1] Sheffield, "Discussion, Lecture-Forum, and Debate," op. cit.

use the expert's opinions and information without succumbing to his prestige.[20] In Training for Group Experience Sheffield admitted that the adult study-circle would have to encounter several handicaps to group thinking: 1) the defense reactions which arise when people feel they are being attacked; 2) the tendency to consider symptoms without examining underlying causes; 3) the tendency to oversimplify the causes in a given social situation; 4) the tendency to seek authoritative pronouncements. The teacher in an adult class encounters these obstacles, and the best way of meeting them is better discussion techniques.[21]

"The situation approach"

The Inquirers always insisted that a discussion should "begin where people are." It should end, of course, with an "integration," the kind of integration Miss Follett had written of earlier, the solution or decision created by a group. But this end could not be reached without the vigorous and vital participation of all members of the group. For example, the Occasional Papers, in a typical page of instructions for the leader, said:

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[20]Sheffield, Creative Discussion, pp. 46 ff.

[21]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Training for Group Experience (New York: The Inquiry, 1929), p. 31.

> It should be evident from the beginning that everyone is expected to take part. The first questions asked by the leader should, therefore, be of a kind to call forth answers from as many of these present as possible. He might begin, suitably, with a few questions that will help him and others to visualize those problems within the general subject field that has been chosen which in their experience appear of real urgency.[22]

These instructions included specific questions which might be asked in opening the discussion on "monotonous work." The essence of this "situation approach" was caught in one sentence by one of the leaders of the 1925 Asbury Park Conference on Conference, who urged: "Start with the things the group know about and are interested in."[23]

Although all the Inquirers used the phrase "the situation approach," it was probably Sheffield who coined it. Certainly he gave it wide usage, for he wrote of it in many of his articles and books. He described it in the first edition of Creative Discussion:

> The group naturally begins with the matter in question by telling one another in what ways it has been for each a matter of experience. This assures its reality for them as something springing up in actual life. Also, it gives each member of the group significant items from other people's lives that supplement his own. Each grows aware of the different points of view from which different types of persons respond to such a situation. Together the members, reporting their several experiences, produce a composite picture of what is most typical in the circum-

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[22]February, 1927.

[23]"Notes on the Method of Group Discussion," June 9, 1925, Inquiry archives.

> stances where the difficulty arises; and they recognize the details thus reported as factors in one or another type of problem that they must reckon with.[24]

Sheffield emphasized that a group studies a situation just as a speaker studies a subject. This helps the participants to learn to respect their own experience and it tends to keep them from needless bickering about cloudy abstractions. It encourages them to consider the many different points of view. He summarized his approach in a New Republic article:

> . . . all of these offer the first educative requisite, in that they begin where people are, with their own interests so stirred as to dispose them to effortful thinking, and can meet the second requisite--and outreach for new facts and richer values--if they make use of methods that stimulate expectancy and resourcefulness in the conference.[25]

Though he may not have coined the phrase, Elliott always suggested that a discussion begin with the situation in which the participants find themselves. Even back in 1913 he had urged the Y.M.C.A. secretaries working with soldier groups to make the first step in planning a religious program for an army camp the appraisal of "the moral and religious situation."[26] Hence his discussion questions

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[24]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, Creative Discussion (New York: The Inquiry, 1926), pp. 18-19.

[25]Sheffield, "Thinking in Concert," op. cit.

[26]Harrison S. Elliott, The Leadership of Red Triangle Groups (New York: Association Press, 1913), p. 5.

were designed to lead into an investigation of the effect of army life and discipline on the Christian character. He continued this same emphasis in his Process of Group Thinking ten years later. He said there:

> In whatever form the problem faces the group, it is important first to recognize that it is not sufficient just to state the problem. Time must be taken for a description of the situation as it appears to various members of the group. It is not enough to open the discussion by mere statement of the question. . . . Even when the question is drawn sharply and is very specific, to go at once to discussion without time for understanding the issue in the setting it has for this particular group makes for needless argument and misunderstanding.[27]

Elliott's insistence that the discussion start where people are is also revealed in his memorandum to Lasker, August, 1924, about the manuscript of And Who Is My Neighbor?

> I have read the manuscript with keen interest. The incidents cover a wide range, are vivid and well told, and really give a person a wide experience with the race question. That is the first essential to a discussion, either a situation experienced by the group or one placed before the members so they have, in a way, a vicarious experience, and consequently feel the issue. It is or becomes of concern as a result.

Lasker continued the Inquiry's emphasis on the situation approach in Democracy through Discussion, where he described the "situation" as "an episode in the interaction between persons and setting."[28] In a letter to a Miss Ball,

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[27] Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, p. 42.

[28] p. 298.

July 14, 1925, he indicated how widespread was the use of this approach.

> After much experience, Elliott and others have arrived at the undeniable truth that a good discussion must start from the real concerns of people. Hence all the machinery for finding out what the participants want to discuss and which of their concerns arise from their personal experience.

The paradigm

But when one wishes to teach others to use the discussion method, there must be some kind of a pattern to follow. The Inquirers, especially Elliott, were the first to develop this pattern and to give it widespread use. Though he was speaking in terms of an individual's thought processes rather than of the group's thinking processes, John Dewey provided the original paradigm in 1910.[29] His system of "reflective thinking" might well be considered a major insight into the fundamental principles of discussion and also an effective technique for charting a group's progress. The Inquiry found "discussion method" the rallying point in the constructive use of conflict just as he had found "reflective thinking" the central concern of education.

Harrison S. Elliott brought Dewey's paradigm into the discussion movement at the very beginning. He had been

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[29]See p. 72 of this dissertation.

studying the discussion of religious matters since the publication of his first book in 1914, a student study guide.[30] In 1913 he cited Dewey's concept of a complete act of thought in his handbook for the Y.M.C.A. army camp personnel.

> Dr. Dewey described the following as the process when we meet a life situation and decide after genuine thought: 1. A Problem. There is some felt difficulty where decision is necessary. We locate and define the problem. 2. Suspended Judgment. We do not act on impulse as in trial and error. We hold decisions in suspence until investigation and thought is possible. 3. Suggested Solutions. Suggested possible courses of action are formulated and examined. 4. The Adoption of a Course of Action. Each suggested solution is examined and weighed. Finally, one is found which seems to meet the test. This is adopted as a working basis. 5. The Testing of this Solution in Experience. This will result in its verification or modification, sometimes even in its rejection.[31]

Elliott felt that this model could be followed by the groups met to study the Bible or those met to study "life problems." But in his heavy emphasis on the leader's burden or responsibility he implied that the group was not to be completely trusted. It is the leader who prepares for the discussion.

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[30] Harrison S. Elliott and Ethel Cutler, Student Standards of Action (New York: Association Press, 1914).

[31] Elliott, Leadership of Red Triangle Groups, pp. 33-34.

He directs it by asking the proper questions. He summarizes the discussion at each point and he provides, too, a summary of the results at the end of the group hour. It is he who gives the discussion its orderliness and direction.[32] Of course, it must be remembered that this study guide was designed for training those who were to lead study groups of World War I soldiers. In that day the leader probably did have to carry a considerable burden.

But Elliott never did consider the five-step Dewey pattern an inflexible guide. In The Process of Group Thinking, after quoting the famous paragraph from How We Think, he pointed out: "The procedure suggested in this book for group thinking is developed from Dewey's analysis of a complete act of thought, though this analysis has been modified and enlarged."[33] Actually, Elliott's outline for discussions followed a three-step rather than a five-step pattern. In his 1920 guide, How Jesus Met Life Questions, he wrote several paragraphs of instructions "to the leader" in which he described the various types of questions to be used to prompt discussion. He said of the general outline:

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[32] Ibid., p. 54.

[33] Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, p. 36.

> It will thus be seen that the questions are arranged in the order of rewarding individual or group thinking, namely, 1) Problem; 2) Solution; 3) Action. The leader will not follow these questions mechanically. He will need to choose, review, eliminate, add and thus make a list of his own, covering however, questions for each of the three sections suggested above--namely, questions to make the PROBLEM understood; questions leading to a search for Jesus' SOLUTION; questions to make possible ACTION, the application of the solution of the problem which has been arrived at.[34]

He continued this same emphasis in his first discussion handbook, The Why and How of Group Discussion, where he gave detailed instructions for the use of his problem-solution-action paradigm, and added: "But, in group thinking, this outline is simply an indication of what might be discussed. It must be put in such a form that the leader shall not do the discussing or deciding, but that the group shall have the opportunity to do both."[35] In this book, too, he again indicated the influence Dewey had had on his thinking, as follows:

> If group discussion is to be considered as group thinking, then rewarding individual thinking ought to be examined in order to understand group thinking. Professor Dewey has rendered a great service both in individual and group thinking by his analysis and description of "How we think." Some persons have said that this is a description of the way Professor Dewey thinks, but a

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[34]Harrison S. Elliott, How Jesus Met Life Questions (New York: Association Press, 1920), p. vi.

[35]Harrison S. Elliott, The Why and How of Group Discussion (New York: Association Press, 1923), p. 54.

> careful consideration of all aspects of life from the simplest immediate decisions to those of largest moment, will show that Professor Dewey has really described how individuals or groups make up their minds when they stop at all to reflect before deciding. It might be better to call group discussion thinking together or a method of arriving at a group decision. The purpose of thinking is decision, action.[36]

By the time he wrote The Process of Group Thinking in 1928, Elliott had learned a great deal about discussion which he did not know in World War I. He continued to outline the "group thinking procedure" in three steps: "1) the situation and its problems; 2) what to do? 3) how to do it (ways and means)?"[37] He continued to emphasize that individual thinking and group thinking are similar processes. He pointed out that group thinking, like individual thinking, has to be learned and that it requires determination and practice. Like all the Inquirers he put a high valuation on the full participation of all the group members. And of course, he described group thinking as different from debate.[38] But it was particularly in his comparison of Dewey's five steps of reflective thinking to Herbart's five steps of teaching that Elliott made

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[36] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[37] Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, p. 55.

[38] Ibid., pp. 9 ff.

abundantly clear just how a group moves through a problem in the direction of action. He revealed, too, how he had come to count less on the leader. "It is important that the emphasis shall be on how we think; and not on what we think. To teach a group what to think keeps it continuously dependent upon the leader. To teach it how to think means that the individuals of the group become each day less dependent upon the leader."[39] In comparison to Dewey's five steps, ranging from "a felt difficulty" to "further observation and experiment," Herbart had listed five steps: preparation, presentation, comparison, generalization, application. Elliott found four significant differences between the two schemes: 1) Purpose. Following Herbart the leader's purpose is to get the group to agree to a conclusion which he has already reached. Following Dewey, the leader joins the other participants in a search or quest. Elliott preferred to speak in terms of process rather than product. 2) Presentation. In the Herbart scheme the second step was one of drawing in the relevant abstract principles. In contrast, the Dewey scheme emphasized the use of the real experience of the participants, leaving the abstract princi-

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[39] Ibid., p. 14.

ples to arise as they would in the discussion. 3) Other points of view. Group thinking emphasizes "a fair and genuine examination of all points of view" whereas the Herbart scheme would rule out giving the opposition a fair hearing. 4) Application. The fifth step of the Herbartian procedure provided for the application of the relevant truth to life situations. Elliott insisted that in group thinking the "application of truth to life" was a part of all five steps. He wanted the participants in a group discussion to make their subject matter their own lives, their own problems, experiences, and situations. Elliott closed his comparison of the two procedures by admitting that the new procedure was difficult to learn, especially by those who had been trained in "the formal Herbartian method." "If group thinking is to be successful it must be more than a modification of Herbart's formal steps of teaching. It must represent genuine thinking on the part of the group."[40]

Though he did not outline the steps of the group process in Joining in Public Discussion, Alfred Dwight Sheffield realized that there must be some principle of order in a discussion. In his mimeographed booklet he began

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[40]Ibid., p. 41.

by making those emphases which were to become characteristic of the Inquiry. A discussion should begin with a real situation. Expert information should be brought in only when the group feels a need for it. Encourage everyone to participate. He went on to point out that the chairman's success depends in large part on his "sense of tactical sequence for the points discussed." He listed four steps:

1. Reporting an illustrative case.
2. Statement of the interests at stake in the question.
3. Explanation of the agencies or methods (proposed or available) for securing the interests.
4. Questions that open the points of conflict to group inspection.[41]

The published version of Sheffield's first discussion handbook, A Cooperative Technique for Conflict, included a similar scheme for discussion progress, illustrated by two cases, one from labor and the other from university education. His statement of the steps was somewhat clearer:

1. The controversial situation sharply presented.
2. The essential problem discovered and analyzed in a way to invite suspended judgment.
3. Data (from authorities and from experience) offered and compared as a basis for suggestions.
4. A plan evoked by exploring the possibilities of action and critically testing the workableness of some course as a solution.
5. New issues arising from action on the plan stated as

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[41]Sheffield, Way of Group Discussion, p. 9.

projects for experiment and further inquiry.[42] Much the same material was included in Creative Discussion, though some of it was considerably rewritten. Elliott's influence is probably evident when Sheffield refers to the steps with four words: "situation--problem--help--solution."[43] Here he emphasized that satisfactory action is the final step of the cycle.

It is not too difficult to trace the development of the discussion paradigm through the work of Elliott and Sheffield, but it is virtually impossible to determine accurately which of these two pioneers, or which other Inquirers, may be most responsible for the Inquiry's "chart for group thinking." The Occasional Papers reported in May, 1927 that the chart had been created by the discussion leadership course at Columbia. That being the case, we may rest assured that Elliott, who taught the course, and Sheffield, who "recorded" it, played a considerable role. The emphasis on "situation" is typical of Sheffield. Elliott, too, was loath to force any discussion into too tight a mold, even though he suggested Dewey's pattern of

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[42]Alfred Dwight Sheffield, A Cooperative Technique for Conflict (New York: National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, 1924), p. 12.

[43]Sheffield, Creative Discussion, p. 55.

How Your Discussion "Gets Somewhere"

LOOK at the members of your discussion group as people with different experiences and points of view who should figure in the thinking that goes into the matter under question, because they share in the consequences of its outcome. The discussion job is to set up an orderly give-and-take of thought that moves by definite steps from what each has experienced to some agreement that all shall have tested. As a group, therefore, you should recognize the steps as they appear, so that at any stage in the discussion you will know where you are. The following chart may help you to see how your thought together is actually moving:

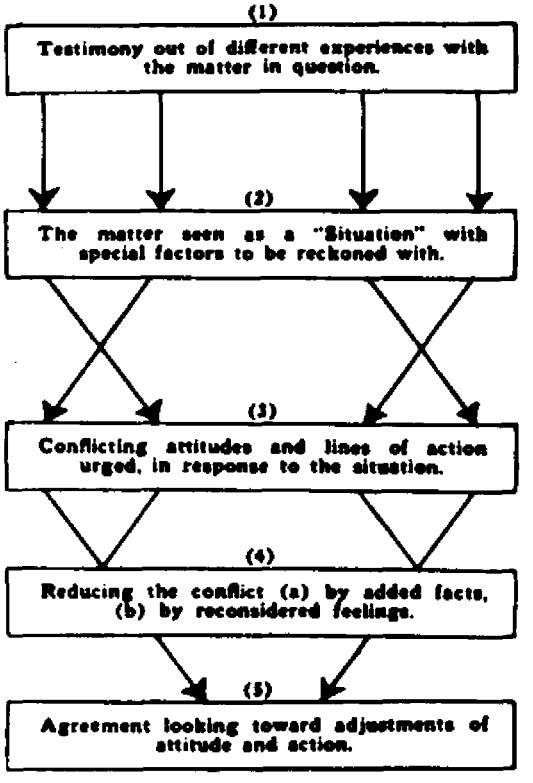
Members of the group will state what they and others have experienced in the matter under discussion. This keeps the talk on points that are live and real.

The instances (or details in a given instance) thus reported show certain features to be reckoned with in the persons and circumstances that are involved. Taken together they constitute a special kind of *situation* with a problem that calls for questioning from different points of view.

Different persons offer conflicting possibilities of attitude and action for dealing with the situation. The points of clash between them determine what is pertinent to discuss.

The group seeks to reduce its differences by getting more information on points of fact and more careful discrimination on points of attitude and desire.

The members reach some agreement that satisfies what each *essentially* wants. It may be a decision (1) on *what to do* and (2) on *how to do it.*



Notice the kind of commitment that the group is trying to reach. It may be one which the members will carry out together as a group; or one which they will promote separately, each through some local unit of an association; or one which they will act on individually, each for himself.

For additional copies and information on available subject outlines and other literature helpful for "live-and-learn" group discussion, address

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129 East 52d Street, New York City

Fig. 2.--The Inquiry's Chart for Group Thinking.

individual thought as being similar to his pattern of group thought. The Inquiry's chart can best be summarized by one of the statements on it: "The discussion job is to set up an orderly give-and-take of thought that moves by definite steps from what each has experienced to some agreement that all shall have tested." As a whole the chart reflects all the Inquiry emphases. It puts a premium on "beginning where people are" and participation. It allows the group a maximum of flexibility. It outlines a process which Miss Follett would certainly have been able to call "integration." It emphasizes the study of attitudes and desires as well as facts. Not only did this chart appear in the Occasional Papers of May, 1927, but it was reprinted separately and widely used in the many conferences where Inquirers served as consultants. It was the first paradigm of "the group process" to have widespread use and influence.

Like Elliott and Sheffield, Bruno Lasker acknowledged his debt to John Dewey for creating the original paradigm of "reflective" thought, and like his two colleages, Lasker refused to let himself be bound by what he read in How We Think. Having pointed out that the great failure of American democracy is its inattention to methods and techniques, Lasker said:

> The democratic process does not imply a choice between ready-made answers but a purposeful joint search for an answer. Group-thinking is not multiple individual thinking, with one idea coming out on top of the others. It is an orderly thought process by which a number of persons help each other examine their own experience and reappraise the ideas they have absorbed in this and other ways. It is a process, too, by which they help each other correct faulty lessons drawn from experience and subject it to fresh interpretations, a process by which they help each other to evaluate various suggestions for meeting the difficulties, problems, or tasks that are seen to arise out of such analysis of experience and learning.[44]

Emphasizing the orderliness as well as the flexibility of the process, Lasker summarized his description of the five-phase "reasonable discussion procedure" as follows:

> Experiments have shown that such a discussion must pass methodically from a) a situation that gives concern, to b) an analysis of the conflicting attitudes about it which are voiced or reported by members, hence to c) a scrutiny of suggested ways of dealing with the situation, in d) the light of circumstances or larger values not at once evident when the matter was first raised, and so if possible to e) some final solution. There are various other ways of stating these five stages if the discussion is to develop from sound premises to a sound conclusion. And the five stages named may be telescoped to make only three major divisions with several subdivisions; or their number may be expanded to give greater emphasis to certain operations which the five-point pattern treats as subsidiary.[45]

A new kind of leadership

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[44]Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, p. 23.

[45]Ibid., pp. 291-292.

In spite of the fact that many must have agreed with Sheffield's early statement that the age of discussion welcomes the potential of the group rather than the potential of a great leader, the Inquirers were from the beginning concerned about the new kind of leadership required by discussion. Strenuous efforts were made at Helsingfors to train the necessary corps of leaders, and the Inquirers found that their task was a formidable one. The three Conferences on Conference were designed to provide leaders among the organizations represented there. The Columbia course was entitled "Discussion Leadership." But the Inquiry always faced, in all its enterprises, the traditional ways of defining leadership as the over-arching influence of a unique individual. Sheffield pointed out, in his report on the Columbia course, that any large organization is always in danger of growing moribund as a result of the old point of view. He said that Inquiry methodology was having a large effect on a number of national organizations, forcing the leaders to find again the methods of releasing the creative energies of the members. No organization can proceed ignorant of the desires of its members. The leaders were finding that they had to restudy their methods and find ways of "beginning with people where they are." In his introduction to the book, John Dewey identified the old way:

> There has long been maturing a conviction that the intellectual methods of democracy are inadequate to the issues with which a democracy has to deal. So inadequate to their task have been its methods of initiating and formulating policies, that decisions have for the most part been made by small bodies of persons who may have indeed a public purpose to serve, but who may also have private ends to gain. These are then "put over" on the public for discussion and adoption, the appeal being largely emotional and directed toward securing adherence rather than criticism and understanding. We have had much condemnation of the process, but little suggestion as to how better methods might be developed and employed.[46]

In Kilpatrick's attempts to help the Institute of Pacific Relations improve its conference methodology, he too recognized that the old concept of leadership had to give way to the new. He said that the discussion leaders should be selected well in advance of the biennial conference and that they should study the techniques of conference leadership as well as the discussion subjects. This period of training should culminate in a few days of study and final preparation immediately preceding the conference itself. As Kilpatrick explained it:

> So strategic is the work of the discussion leader in the success of the conference that this office should be considered solely as an expert service and not at all as an honor or courtesy to be apportioned among the several national groups. The leaders should therefore be chosen exclusively for fitness to perform their specific work as guides to the discussion groups.

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[46]Sheffield, Training for Group Experience, p. x.

> Their national affiliations should not be considered. To lessen the asceiption of honor it might be well never to publish either the name or the nationality of the discussion leaders as such.[47]

Mary Parker Follett had already worked out a rather careful concept of the new type of leadership. For her the old concept of authoritarian leadership pictured a compelling personality as the leader, wielding great personal influence, demanding that others follow him. She wished to conceive of leadership rather as a function of the group which one person or another may fill at a given time. The truly democratic leader is the person who can release the creative energies of those around him. He understands the nature and purpose of integration. He is keenly aware of the dynamics of the groups of which he is a part. Miss Follett discussed this new concept of leadership at some length in a 1927 lecture for the Bureau of Personnel Administration. She emphasized that she was considering a business organization as a "functional unity" rather than as one based on "equality" or "arbitrary authority." She said:

> I believe we shall soon think of the leader as one who can organize the experience of the group, make it all

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[47] William Heard Kilpatrick, "The Management of Discussion," Occasional Papers, December, 1927.

> available and most effectively available, and thus get the full power of the group. It is by organizing experience that we transform experience into power. And that is what experience is for, to be made into power.[43]

At the end of this lecture Miss Follett admitted that there was little of this kind of leadership in many businesses, but she said she saw many signs of hope. She felt that businessmen could make a significant contribution because they were always in a position of having to put the fundamental principles into action. She summarized by considering briefly the relationship of leadership to her "fundamental principles of organization." 1) Evoking. The man who wishes to lead must educate and train those around him to release their latent personal power. 2) Integrating. "The great leader is he who is able to integrate the experience of all and use it for a common purpose." 3) Emerging. Above all, the leader must see the values which emerge from coordinated activity; he must be able to direct those around him toward these emerging values.[49]

Many critics have accused discussion experts of

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[43]Mary Parker Follett, Dynamic Administration (Edited by Henry C. Metcalf and L. Urwick; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), p. 258.

[49]Ibid., pp. 267 ff.

advocating disorderliness in group deliberation. But all the Inquirers insisted that a skilled group moves carefully from one point to another, and the group leader plays a key role in this process. In his mimeographed booklet The Way of Group Discussion Sheffield described this leader:

> One party to the discussion ought to be charged with a special concern for its integrity as a social process. The appropriate member for this role is the chairman. Better than the others he can keep his mind on the points already remarked as making for progress. . . . In addition he can maneuver the speaking in ways: 1) to temper combativeness, 2) to save time, 3) to register agreement point by point.[50]

In Creative Discussion Sheffield considered the task of the discussion leader in more detail. Before the meeting he is the man responsible for arranging the place of meeting and assuring a plentiful supply of fact material. During the meeting he pilots the group, in the sense that he keeps them aware of the dangers and pitfalls along the way. Leading the search for both agreements and disagreements, he himself remains neutral. When his group has agreed on the subjects to consider, he keeps them on the agenda. Periodically he makes them aware of their progress by summarizing, and at the end he provides a summary which indicates the

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[50] p. 3.

decision of the group.[51] Elliott presented a similar picture of the leader, the man who watches over the discussion process and sees to it that everyone participates. Elliott put a heavy emphasis on preparation. The leader must study his group and his subject and work out an outline of questions which are likely to come up, recognizing that the direction the group takes may necessitate changes on the spot. And through it all he should maintain a keen interest in the subject and the group.[52] In one of his books Lindeman described the new kind of leader as he would play the role of teacher in adult education. His statement reveals the heavy influence of Miss Follett.

> Discussion is organized talk. When two or more persons exchange experiences for the purpose of throwing light upon a situation, and when the confronting of the situation is itself regarded as an educative opportunity, a tacit recognition to the effect that certain rules are to be followed, is present. If, for example, the group exceeds five or six in number, it usually becomes necessary to agree upon a chairman or leader whose functions will be to keep the discussion going, to maintain its direction, to enlist active participation of all members of the group, to point out discrepancies and relations, to sum up arguments, facts and conclusions, et cetera. When discussion is used as method for adult

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[51] Sheffield, Creative Discussion, pp. 24 ff.

[52] Elliott, Why and How, pp. 21 ff.

> teaching, the teacher becomes group-chairman; he no longer sets problems and then casts about with various kinds of bait until he gets back his preconceived answer; nor is he the oracle who supplies answers which students carry off in their notebooks; his function is not to profess but to evoke--to draw out, not pour in; he performs in various degrees the office of interlocutor (one who questions and interprets), prolocutor (one who brings all expressions before the group), coach (one who trains individuals for team-play), and strategist (one who organizes parts into wholes and keeps the total action aligned with the group's purpose). The teacher or chairman does not organize discussion--he keeps it in organized channels. Whatever he brings to the group in the form of opinions, facts and experiences must be open to question and criticism on the same terms as the contributions of other participants.[53]

Lindeman's statement also reveals that the Inquirers were thinking of leadership as a number of roles within the group. One 1925 Inquiry memorandum pointed out:

> In the management of discussion keep in mind three separate functions: A. Chairmanship. B. Summarizing. C. Providing data. All of these you may carry out yourself as leader; or you may call on members for help. For example, you may have a chairman to state the question and recognize the speakers, and do nothing yourself but summarize. You should, of course, try to secure needed data from the group, but if they cannot supply it, then you should yourself do so as far as possible. You will help make clear your change of role if you ask permission to become one of the group, and make it plain that you are doing so by moving away from the chairman's table.[54]

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[53]E. C. Lindeman, The Meaning of Adult Education (New York: New Republic, Inc., 1926), pp. 187-188.

[54]"Notes on the Method of Group Discussion," June 9, 1925, Inquiry archives.

the second Conference on Conference discussed, among other things, the problem of leadership. The Occasional Papers reported that the delegates were able to identify three different types: 1) "the chairman or director of procedure." Contributing questions and summaries, he is responsible for the thought process of the group. 2) "the scientific specialist." He is responsible for the adequacy and the reliability of the data which the group uses. 3) "the person of experience and conviction who speaks from an outlook on the wider bearings of the matter under discussion." Though not an expert in the scientific sense, he speaks "out of long and wide experience and responsible concern." The Inquiry, of course, wanted to take emphasis and prominence away from the last two types; they wanted to train the leaders who could get everyone to contributing his best.[55] In his chapter on "divisions of functions," Lasker discussed leadership in typical Inquiry terms. The leader helps ". . . the members to weave their own voluntary contributions into a counterpoint of meaningful progression of thought."[56] He also described the different types of

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[55]July-August, 1926.

[56]Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, p. 149.

leader which a group needs: the subject expert, the reporter, the specially-prepared participant, and the chairman. He concluded, of the chairman:

> Finally, all the matters referred to in this section are subsidiary to the main requirement: the leader must have faith in democracy. Nearly all the aptitudes that have been named hinge on his capacity to abdicate such authority as he may enjoy in other personal relationships and to function solely as the guide and mediator of the group.[57]

The place of the expert

As they clarified the different roles of leadership which a group might need, the Inquirers were able to redefine the function of the subject matter expert and give him a productive work within the group process. They were all somewhat suspicious of the inclination of many to bow to the expert's opinion. They recognized that common experience is a valuable source of data, for those willing to seek it there. Frequently an informed layman can bring needed information into the group. Data papers can be prepared for study before the meeting. Members can be assigned reading in books and magazines. This confidence in the resources available to ordinary folk is reflected in a statement about the first Conference on Conference at Asbury Park:

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[57] Ibid., p. 160.

> Someone has described a conference of this kind as a "coming together of a lot of people to pool their lack of information." In actuality, and this was a surprise to many, there is far more information, and skill in meeting a problem, in the possession of average people than is usually supposed; only it requires the special stimulus of the back and forth of disciplined, progressive argument to bring it out.[58]

The discussion leader, of course, remained the chief figure in any group process, and hence, in a sense, ranked above the expert. In reporting the progress of the Columbia course in training leaders for this "skilled job of social engineering," the Occasional Papers said;

> The leader of this type is charged with a special responsibility for the thought-process of the group. As chairman, he is directly concerned with the two-fold problem of a) How to secure discussion which is at once cooperative, free and fair to all parties and yet which "gets somewhere"; b) How in this process to secure a responsible use of the facts and experience of people who have special expertness and experience. He recognizes that in any complex situation under study the issues before the group are partly issues of fact, so that discussion requires stoking with data from competent sources, and partly issues of purpose--requiring thought about values as sensed by people of differing backgrounds and points of view.[59]

The expert, then, is to function as one of the group participants, ready to share in the give and take of the discussion. Wrestling with the problem of arranging an international

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[58] Occasional Papers, June, 1925.

[59] May, 1927.

national conference, Kilpatrick advised the Institute of Pacific Relations:

> In a word, the expert as such is present to furnish more exact knowledge when and because it is needed as data in the course of discussion. The solution belongs to the members themselves. The chairman or any member should feel free to appeal to the expert to furnish knowledge; and the expert himself should feel free to volunteer it when he conceives the discussion to be going astray through lack of it. Of course, as a member of the round table the expert enjoys all the rights of any member to express himself properly on any matter under discussion. It is only as expert that his duties limit this right.[60]

Mary Parker Follett, in the first chapter of Creative Experience, also spoke out against giving the expert more than his share of influence. Her emphases were similar to those of the Inquirers who were following her lead. She recognized that "the fact-worshippers" never had all the answers that were needed. She too believed in a world of change where no fact was stationary for long. She found that the experts disagreed and frequently their disagreement rested on a highly restrictive use of language. Like all the Inquirers, she wanted the expert to participate as one of the group, contributing when his experience qualified him.[61] Sheffield, who had read the Creative Experience manuscript

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[60] Kilpatrick, "Management," op. cit.

[61] Mary Parker Follett, Creative Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924), pp. 4 ff.

before publication, considered the place of the expert in some detail in the first of the Inquiry's works on discussion; he pointed out that expert advice is necessary in many complex areas, but he asserted that the expert's facts have to be combined with the facts of everyday experience. He also asserted that the problems of a more ideal social order center often in questions of purpose rather than in questions of fact.[62] Like the other Inquirers, Elliott recognized that people frequently attempt to discuss a question without knowing enough about it. Yet, he insisted, completely adequate data is not available for every question that has to be asked and answered. Since none of life's decisions is based on more than the most reliable available information, a group discussion often provides for individuals an increased opportunity for sharing the available data. He explained:

> The difficulty with the critics of group discussion is in their assumption that every person must be informed before he commences to consider a question. This assumption fails to recognize how a person becomes well informed and the place of information in thinking and action.[63]

The decisive point for Elliott remained the willingness to

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[62]Sheffield, Way of Group Discussion, p. 4.

[63]Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, p. 131.

seek information, not the size of the availability of the supply. Often the group will find that its own resources are adequate.

Again and again the Inquirers were able to demonstrate the effectiveness of making the expert a part of the group and letting him contribute when his facts were needed. Early in 1925 Bruno Lasker and the Race Commission arranged a series of informal discussions on the subject "Prejudice as a Social Phenomenon." Some twenty to twenty-five people attended these sessions, where Dr. Julius Drachsler was invited in for his expert opinion. The verbatim record of these meetings indicates that they began with a rather long statement by Drachsler, followed by discussion in which all participated freely. Some questioned the expert, some contributed their own points of view, some disagreed with the expert, Bruno Lasker served as discussion leader. A meeting similar to these was held at the Inquiry offices on March 12, 1925 where the eminent British political scientist Dr. A. E. Zimmern, served as a guest expert. He, too, made an introductory statement which was followed by a long informal discussion. James G. MacDonald of the Foreign Policy Association served as discussion leader.[64] In larger

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[64]The minutes of these meetings are contained in the Inquiry archives.

meetings of conferences and institutes, the expert was brought into the proceedings similarly. At the Vassar Institute, according to a small pamphlet by Sheffield, the experts, such as Professors Washburn, Drachsler, and Shotwell, were brought into the conference program as their special knowledge was needed. It is not insignificant to note that the Institute leaders set aside questions of fact deserving their attention until they could be worked into the program. The 1927 Massachusetts Conference of Social Work was built around the contribution of two experts, Dr. Goodwin Watson of Teachers College and Dr. Elton Mayo of Harvard.[65] The Occasional Papers reported that the situation approach was used at the Olivet Conference of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order where the discussion leaders maintained the group process in which the experts, such as Paul Douglas, Leo Woolman, Sidney Hillman, and Reinhold Neibuhr "played into a process of winnowing wisdom from experience."[66] Elliott described another large meeting (where he had himself played a key role):

> This relation of the expert was well illustrated in Prof. William H. Kilpatrick's participation in a Boys'

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[65] Occasional Papers, November, 1927.

[66] September, 1925.

> work assembly. Immediate specific questions of membership, program, and tests were being decided. These involved certain expert data of psychology as to how character is formed; what is the effect of incentives; how purposes are formed and the place they play in conduct. Professor Kilpatrick made no effort whatever to suggest to the group what they ought to decide. He did listen to the discussions and in special addresses as well as incidentally in the discussion made available such expert information from experimental education as bore upon decision of these questions. The assembly made up its own mind, but it made it up in the light of expert information.[67]

This is a good description of the master teacher at work, using discussion as his method, and it illustrates, too, that the Inquirers made themselves capable of the tasks they prescribed for others.

The size of the group

Stressing participation as they did, the Inquirers recognized that each individual participant's chances decrease as the size of the group increases. In his criticism of the Baltimore Conference on American Relations with China Sheffield found one of the chief weaknesses to be that there was not enough time arranged where small groups could allow everyone to participate. In an earlier publication he had considered the discussion groups which were to be sponsored by the National Conference on the Christian Way

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[67] Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, p. 135.

of Life, suggesting that the groups should meet weekly for an hour and a half, and pointing out:

> There is no arbitrary limit to the number of persons that may profitably compose a discussion group. Where the number rises much over twenty, however, the meeting tends to take on the public character of a forum rather than the face-to-face character of a group. Outside speakers should be used only where they bring into the discussion expert knowledge that supplements the experience voiced by members of the group. Ideally the latter should be people who expect to learn something from one another's differences, who will think together, and may even act together. "The expert, experience, and experiment" is the desired formula for social dynamic.[68]

In his paper for the Institute of Pacific Relations Kilpatrick pointed out that the size of a round-table depends on the efficiency of the leader, the difficulty of the topic, and the discussion skills of the members. There is as great a danger of getting the group too small as there is of getting it too large. For a few participants will not have enough variety of opinion and mutual stimulation.[69] Lasker emphasized that the size as well as the character of the group influences discussion effectiveness. Looking back on some forty years of the discussion movement, in which he had been an active participant, he could see a considerable variety of opinion as to the proper size for a group. He

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[68]Sheffield, Cooperative Technique, p. 22.

[69]Kilpatrick, "Management," op. cit. -

explained that the optimum size varied with the function of the group. As a rule an action group should be smaller than a study group. The group should never be so large as to frighten the timid member or to prompt the speech-maker to use more than his share of the time.[70] In a later chapter Lasker said:

> A smaller group can meet more often, can analyze more discerningly the information before it, can enter into a less formal exchange of explanatory comment, can compare conflicting suggestions for solutions with some attention to detail, and finally can come to a consensus by some means other than voting.[71]

As the Inquirers saw it, the important thing is that the participants be able to observe each other and to respons without interference.

The shape of the group

The size of the groups has to be limited in the interests of participation, and similarly the shape of the group has to be arranged so as to invite participation. According to Samuel Tenenbaum, Kilpatrick was first able to try out his new theories about 1915 at the Horace Mann School, then used by Teachers College as a practice laboratory. The key feature of the whole experiment lay in re-

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[70] Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, pp. 61-62.

[71] Ibid., pp. 95-96.

placing the old formal arrangement of screwed-down desks with movable chairs and tables. Tenenbaum reports:

> "With one child sitting at a desk by himself," explained Kilpatrick, "you could not have a program where children could confer, where they could work together, where they could move around; there can't really be an activity program, except of a very narrow limited kind."[72]

The first experiment was quite successful and soon other teachers in the school were using Kilpatrick's new method. He and the other Inquirers faced a similar problem of making proper arrangements wherever they took the discussion message. Perhaps the most striking example of this special arrangement came at Helsingfors, where each group of thirty delegates was in itself a miniature international conference, fifty of them in all. The Occasional Papers reported that the Finnish hosts had gone to some length to satisfy the requests for proper meeting rooms:

> The physical arrangements of the conferences in themselves were indicative of the new democratic note which is coming into religious education. The vitality of the conference resided not in the great assembly in church but in the classrooms of the higher public schools of the city. And even here the method of the conference involved material rearrangements. The democratic educational method necessitated the unscrewing in each room of thirty benches, row on row, converging on a teacher as the sole source of enlightenment and rearranging them into a hollow square or, more often, a circle, so that each member of the group should easily be seen and heard by all the others without the formality

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[72] Samuel Tennenbaum, William Heard Kilpatrick (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), pp. 225-226.

of getting up to face them.[73]

The Inquirers had learned, sometimes at a considerable cost, what discussion experts now take for granted. The spatial relations of the participants have a heavy influence on the functioning of the group. Elliott summarized the Inquiry point of view in a statement which also reflects the kind of opposition he and his colleagues met:

> . . . Some circular arrangement gives the best results in small group discussions. The important thing is that just as far as possible members have a chance to look into the faces of other members. A conversation would not be very free in any room if the chairs were so arranged that one looked at the back of the head of the person with whom he was trying to converse; but this is the arrangement in the ordinary assembly. Either a circle or a hollow square should be used in the seating arrangement. Both architects and janitors seem to have a sense of order which makes them feel that it is absolutely essential that chairs be placed in exact rows, and that every person shall have the opportunity to look at the back of the head of the person in front of him.[74]

The preparation of the participants

In a sense all the Inquiry's instructions and techniques involved preparation for discussion. The leaders are to be trained. The experts are to be briefed as to their proper role within the group. Proper arrangements of time and space are to be made before the meeting begins. Yet

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[73] November, 1926.

[74] Elliott, Process of Group Thinking, pp. 64-65.

the Inquirers all recognized that the participants needed to read about the issues and study the questions before coming together. In his consideration of "preparation of members" Lasker explained that the preparatory reading matter must be carefully and skilfully written; discussion participants must not only be instructed--they must be attracted to the study. Some of them may even be asked to prepare preliminary reports, hence serving in a near-expert capacity. Lasker was true to his Inquiry heritage when he emphasized that an outline, properly prepared, could serve to guide the preparatory study as well as the discussion itself.[75] A major part of this preparatory work had to consist of a survey of the needs and interests of the participants. Elliott pointed out that the shift to the group-thinking type of conference involves much more than just a change in the format of the series of meetings. The "Helsingfors Inquiry" had been set up to determine the real problems in the minds of the delegates. At a small Inquiry-sponsored "conference on methodology" he reported that the international office of the Y.M.C.A. had sent out an 383 item questionnaire which had been used extensively. Many

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[75]Lasker, Democracy through Discussion, pp. 97-108.

reports of the discussion surrounding the use of this questionnaire had flowed into the office, to be used in the preparation of the syllabus and handbook of the conference itself. In the same meeting Miss McCulloch reported that a "pre-convention bulletin" had been sent out to the Y.W.C.A.'s well in advance of the Milwaukee National Convention of 1926. Its questions and suggestions were designed to arouse discussion of the pertinent organizational matters in small groups of girls and women across the nation. The National Board had received reports of these discussions from time to time, and this helped them to plan the convention.[76] This type of pre-meeting planning and preparatory discussion became typical during the Inquiry's decade. The extensive research projects of the Institute of Pacific Relations originated in the attempts of the staff to prepare for the biennial international meetings. The Inquirers had discovered that a maximum of participation comes only after careful preparations are made, and thus "data papers," questionnaires, and discussion outlines became standard parts of their method. As MacIver was able to determine, the increasing quality of their publications through the

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[76] Official minutes, Conference on Methodology, March 19, 1926.

years reveals their increasing grasp of the intricacies of real "conference" planning.[77]

In summary

It was in the formulation of these techniques and instructions that the Inquirers made a significant contribution to the discussion movement. Before their decade the few scattered comments on the discussion method were guesses and speculations. After their decade, building on the foundation they had laid, many scholars and teachers gave the development of the method concentrated attention. In their series of layman experiments they set the direction from which the movement has never deviated. They knew that the size and shape of the group were powerful factors in determining a group's success. Putting the suggestions of Mary Parker Follett into practice, they worked out the practical implications of the new kind of leadership demanded by discussion, including the necessary training programs. The expert is left to function as a group member, contributing facts only as they are needed. The Inquirers applied John Dewey's famous pattern of individual thought to the process of group thought and provided discussion students and teachers with a rich new dimension

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[77] MacIver, Report, p. 16.

of understanding. They taught their successors that the effective group begins "where people are." Frequently suggesting that discussion should entirely replace debate, they promised from discussion a rich new harvest of understanding and consensus. And they helped to train a generation of conferees that the new method demands careful preparation and training. All these techniques and instructions needed to be tested and used, of course, and the Inquirers led the way, in hundreds of conferences and groups, patiently suggesting, directing, and challenging. Those who have followed these second-generation pioneers have found that they did their work well.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The origins of the discussion movement lie deep in the major thought currents of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for those who provided the rationale of the movement were intimately acquainted with the earlier thinkers in the Age of Science. Yet, in 1922, when the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life received its charter from the Federal Council of Churches, the task of developing effective social methods had been largely ignored. Among those who worked in this direction the names of Harrison S. Elliott, Alfred Dwight Sheffield, E. C. Lindeman, E. C. Carter, Rhoda McCulloch, William Heard Kilpatrick, and S. H. Keeny must rank high. They had already begun the task when they came to work together in the Inquiry. During World War I Elliott had trained Y.M.C.A. personnel in the use of "group programs" in army camps; Sheffield had taught a course in "public discussion" at the Boston Trades Union College; Kilpatrick had begun a few years earlier to use discussion as an educational method in

his Teachers College classes. Carter, Miss McCulloch, and the others had been for some years searching for more effective means of bringing people to work together, creatively and harmoniously. As an organization the Inquiry gave them the opportunity they needed.

In placing the Inquiry in its historical setting this study has revealed that these applied social scientists worked in a time of ballyhoo, a period when serious and competent criticism and historical research had to compete for attention with a number of cults and popularizers. This was the heyday of the innovations and the unusual. This study has revealed, too, that these early champions of discussion worked under the heavy influence of a number of fertile thinkers. In the immediate past it was Walter Bagehot who had suggested that the new epoch just beginning might be termed "the age of discussion." Those who followed him, especially Graham Wallas and Woodrow Wilson, regarded the rapid expansion of the electorate as a significant twentieth century phenomenon, and they called for a new emphasis on what Wilson termed "the processes of common counsel" and for a wider use of the various methods of public discussion. Much of the influence of these fertile thinkers on the Inquiry was probably indirect, reaching them through their reading and discussion, being an important

part of the mood of the times.

However, there are three thinkers whose influence has been identified as more direct and immediate. These Inquirers worked in the shadow of John Dewey, Mary Parker Follett, and Walter Rauschenbusch. Along with Bagehot, Wallas, and Wilson, Dewey had seen the promise of public discussion as early as the turn of the century. Probably he more than any other American was responsible for establishing a new intellectual climate which demanded a rigorous examination of methodology. Historians seem agreed that John Dewey in his own long lifetime became the symbol for those who would approach social problems scientifically. Though he was not himself a methodologist, he provided for Elliott, the Inquirers, and all who followed them in the discussion movement a teachable paradigm for group thought. But it was Mary Parker Follett who demanded that instruction in the group principle should accompany instruction in public speaking; it was she who suggested that "the new state" should be organized around the group instead of around the individual and the government. She gave the American individual a new dimension of existence in the groups which play such a key role in his life. She wanted the participant-citizen to seek "integration" instead of compromise or coercion. She saw

"discussion" as the only method which might be used in achieving this goal. Her friends in the Inquiry set out to answer in practice the questions she raised in theory. Yet they might have never come together had not the Social Gospel provided a model organization and a challenge worthy of the philanthropists' bounty. Walter Rauschenbusch became the best-known leader and exponent of this new church doctrine, though others both before and after him helped to force the church to confront the ills of society. Although he was heavily oriented toward the socialism prevailing in his time, enough of the Christian tradition persisted in him to provide a divine sanction for his work. The Federal Council of Churches, which the Social Gospelers and other liberal Christians founded in 1908, not only gave the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life an official status; it translated the Social Gospel into various other programs of action. The Inquiry, in short, grew out of the confluence of progressive education, represented by John Dewey, the social work movement, represented by Mary Parker Follett, and the Social Gospel, represented by Walter Rauschenbusch.

Though the Inquirers were not great innovators in the realm of theory and principle, this study has revealed that they did from time to time attempt to clarify the

essentials of their social creed. These attempts were not too successful, but they do indicate the repeated emphases in the Inquirers' thought. Drawing particularly from the work of John Dewey, they looked on the scientific method as being the only proper way of approaching social problems; even if they were not scientists, they wanted to emulate them in their careful experimentalism. This involved in social life what Sheffield termed "the constructive use of conflict." Here they followed the lead of Mary Parker Follett. They followed her, too, in emphasizing the participant democracy, though Elliott may have contributed as much as she on this aspect of the creed. Certainly they all shared in the vision of the new democracy which Woodrow Wilson had championed some ten years before. But if all the citizens are to participate, where can a common meeting ground be found? The Inquirers answered: in the methods of working together. Like Miss Follett they recognized "integration" as the chief goal of the social process. Like Dewey they hoped to see the ultimate goals arise in the process itself. And discussion is the chief method for the democratic community which seeks to solve its problems scientifically. Interestingly enough, the Inquirers saw only education and decision-making as aims for discussion; they seemed unaware of its therapeutic potential, which is now

widely recognized in many branches of medicine. Although no sharp line can be drawn between the principles the Inquirers inherited and those they made the salient features of their social creed, this analysis has revealed that they derived their techniques and instructions from a solid foundation.

Although this study has presented the essential facts in the story of the Inquiry, they are significant only in that they reveal how the group organized to do its work. The fact that they had an office and competent clerical assistance is significant, for they were able to do whatever publishing and planning they found necessary. The fact that they had adequate financial support, too, freed them to go wherever discussion training was needed. The fact that they carried on an extensive publishing program is significant, for their books and pamphlets carried their techniques and instructions to many whom they did not contact personally. Though the full extent of their influence has proved difficult to determine, the outstanding and typical examples of their conference leadership and study have been easy to identify and describe. Led by Elliott, a group of Inquirers brought about an unusual change in the International Y.M.C.A.'s ways of arranging conferences. The Inquiry played a key role in the founding of the Institute of Pacific Relations and in the design of its biennial conferences; later

it also provided trained leadership for various key positions in the Institute. The Baltimore Conference on American Relations with China has been presented as a good example of the kind of unofficial sponsorship which became an Inquiry specialty. The three conferences on conference were, similarly, held under other auspices. The Columbia course on discussion leadership was no doubt largely the responsibility of Elliott, but with so large a group of students he needed assistance. It was the Inquiry staff which stood ready to help him plan and manage the course. In all of these conferences and study sessions the Inquiry made one of its great contributions to the discussion movement. This group of conference experts sent out their message in the publications, but they also recognized that personal contact could provide best the needed training and direction. They spread the word about the promise of the discussion method from Helsingfors to Honolulu and around the world.

Wherever and whenever conference planners and programs committees sought their assistance, these discussion experts were ready with instructions and tested techniques. For their second great contribution to the discussion movement was that they specialized in the practical demands of day-to-day and hour-to-hour planning.

Some of the personal touches which they added to their leadership have probably been lost from the historical record. But in the record that remains we can see, first, that they were opposed to debate. True, some of them were more vehement in their opposition than others. Perhaps it was that they often found it easier to explain the new method in comparison to the old. Yet they were realistic, and some of them in particular were sharply aware of the limitations of the discussion method. In spite of these, they insisted on what they liked to call "the situation approach" and thereby disarmed their opponents and challenged the skeptics. They printed thousands of their "chart for group thinking" and used it in conference after conference to teach the nature of the group process. Following Miss Follett's lead they recognized the need for a new kind of leader, a friendly moderator to nurture the process, and like her, they felt that the expert should play a new role as a valued participant in the process though he should have no more than his proper share of influence. They were keenly aware of what are now called "the dynamics" of the group, and they taught that the size and shape of the group must be carefully arranged. Last, and perhaps most important of all, they taught that the desired spontaneity could be encouraged by a careful and skilled preparation of

of the conferees. In short, when conference planners called on the Inquirers for advice and counsel, they found men and women rich in experience, who had long since agreed that theories and principles must be translated into programs of action.

In summary, the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life was pledged at its origin to a new kind of meeting. Its staff, who gradually changed its nature and its name, remained true to this pledge even when the vision of a great national gathering had to be abandoned. They made "The Inquiry" a national center for the development of the discussion method. When they began no one had paid much attention to the mundane details of conference procedure. When they finished, scores of groups and organizations were ready to join the movement and to continue the study of method and the invention of techniques. They had taken "discussion" into the everyday lives of people and given it a local habitation and a name.

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.hy the Church: .. Syllabus of Questions for Use by Discussion Leaders. New York: National Conference on the Christian Way of Life, 1925.

B. Periodicals.

The Inquiry: Occasional Papers from .ll Parts of the Country, Published on the Top Floor of 129 East 52nd Street, New York. March, 1925--June, 1930.

Commonly called "The Occasional Papers" by the Inquirers, this small periodical appeared six to eight times per year during the some six years of publication. It contained discussion outlines, conference reports, news items, book reviews, and other materials reflecting the interests and activities of a group of discussion experts.

C. Pamphlets.

Draft Treaty of Disarmament and Security. Commentary by James T. Shotwell. New York: The Inquiry, no date.

Hader, John J., and Eduard C. Lindeman. Committees, Their Purposes, Functions, and Administration. New York: American Management Association, 1929.

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B. Miscellaneous mimeographed materials.

MacIver, Robert M. Report on the Inquiry. New York: The Inquiry, 1921.

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IV. INTERVIEWS.

Boston, Massachusetts. Personal interview with Alfred Dwight Sheffield. August 31, 1956.

New Canaan, Connecticut. Personal interview with Miss Rhoda McCulloch. May 25, 1957.

New York City. Personal interview with Dr. F. Ernest Johnson. September 4, 1957.

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Yonkers, New York. Personal interviews with Bruno Lasker. August 23 and 30, 1956.

V. THE INQUIRY ARCHIVES.

According to the minutes of the last meeting, May 25, 1933, E. C. Carter agreed to store the Inquiry's "archives." The author has received what remains of this material, a file drawer filled with letters, memoranda, reports, minutes, and other documents. In addition, Miss Rhoda McCulloch has given him her files of this period. All this material remains in the author's personal possession.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Richard Pfaff Douthit was born March 26, 1926 at Peters, Florida. He received his public schooling in Dade County, Florida and Forsyth County, North Carolina. In 1947 he entered Berea College, to graduate there in June, 1951 as a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English. He began graduate study at Louisiana State University in September, 1951 and received the Master of Arts in Speech in June, 1953. He is presently Assistant Professor of Speech at Texas Christian University.

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

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Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: A Historical Study of Group Discussion Principles and Techniques Developed by "The Inquiry," 1922-1933

Approved:

Lionel W. Barden
Major Professor and Chairman

Richard J. Russell
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Date of Examination:

May 1, 1961